

1984

The gospel of preservation in Virginia and New England : historic preservation and the regeneration of traditionalism

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**THE GOSPEL OF PRESERVATION IN VIRGINIA AND NEW ENGLAND:
HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND THE REGENERATION OF TRADITIONALISM**

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

PH.D. 1984

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THE GOSPEL OF PRESERVATION IN VIRGINIA AND
NEW ENGLAND: HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND
THE REGENERATION OF TRADITIONALISM

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by


James Michael Lindgren

1984

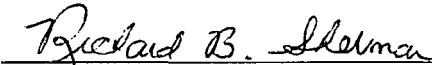
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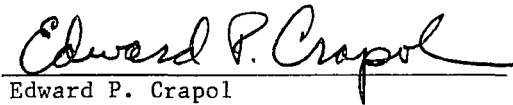
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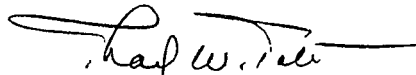
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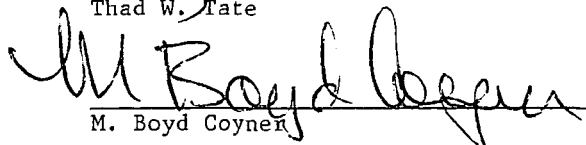

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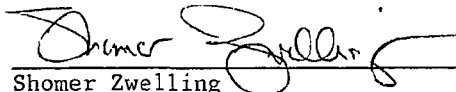
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	v
ABSTRACT	vii
INTRODUCTION	2
 Chapter	
I. THE GOSPEL OF PRESERVATION	8
II. THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA ANTIQUITIES AND THE RESTORATION OF THE OLD DOMINION	55
III. THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA ANTIQUITIES AND THE POLITICS OF HISTORY	133
IV. THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND ANTIQUITIES AND THE REAFFIRMATION OF OLD NEW ENGLAND	210
V. THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND ANTIQUITIES AND THE MODERNIZATION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION	279
VI. THE REGENERATION OF TRADITIONALISM THROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION	343
CONCLUSION	414
APPENDICES	426
BIBLIOGRAPHY	429

PREFACE

This study essentially began six years ago when I was on the faculty of Old Dominion University and was called upon to teach a course, an "Introduction to Historic Preservation." As I researched the history of the historic preservation movement for my lectures, I realized that with the exception of Charles B. Hosmer's broad survey of the pre-1926 movement little had been written on the subject. For the dissertation I chose, therefore, an analysis of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). These two organizations were selected partly because they offered a good contrast in philosophy, style, and substance, and partly because they were established during my own periods of expertise, the Gilded Age and Progressive era. Although I began this study as an organizational analysis, I was more or less propelled to launch a broader cultural study as the only adequate method to present the motivations and actions of the preservationists.

It would have been impossible to undertake this dissertation without the unflinching assistance of the staffs of both the APVA and the SPNEA. I especially want to thank Robert A. Murdock, Executive Director of the APVA, Abbott Lowell Cummings, Executive Director of the SPNEA, and Ellie Reichlin, Librarian of the SPNEA. I am indebted as well to the librarians and archivists at the College of William and Mary, the Virginia Historical Society, the Library of Congress, the University of Virginia,

Duke University, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Valentine Museum, the Virginia State Library, and the American Antiquarian Society. Sincere thanks are also rendered to my committee members: Edward P. Crapol, Thad W. Tate, M. Boyd Coyner, Shomer Zwelling, and most particularly my director, Richard B. Sherman. An appreciative word is similarly extended to James P. Whittenburg, Director of the Graduate Program in History, who helped me to secure college research grants for my many months of travel to these archives. Finally, my spouse, Mary Ann Weiglhofer, deserves special commendation not only for her patience, but for her critical reading of the dissertation as well.

ABSTRACT

Historic preservation movements and their philosophies generally have been overlooked by historians as particular reflections of their periods. This is a cultural history, therefore, of two organizations--the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA, 1889) and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA, 1910)--from their establishment through the Progressive era. Since both organizations mirrored the perspectives, class, and culture of their organizers and leaders, this study relies upon the published and unpublished writings of the leading preservationists. Fearing that society had abandoned the traditions associated with their ancestors, they preached a Gospel of Preservation, a message that the future stability of society was inextricably linked to the citizen's loyalty to traditionalism. Striving to regenerate the older values, ethics, and discipline, preservationists used historic buildings and sites as symbols for the old order and as devices to influence the course of modern society. The two associations, however, employed different means to implement their gospels. While the APVA concentrated its efforts on a romantic reinterpretation of Virginia history, the SPNEA emphasized a scientific preservation of New England's built environment.

Both organizations were integral parts of traditionalist resurgences in their respective regions. After two decades of chaos, the APVA used history to help restore the conservatives' order, identity, and philosophy of traditionalism. The SPNEA, on the other hand, reacted to changes resulting from immigration and industrial capitalism. It worked to professionalize the movement, establish scientific methods, protect the Yankee's material culture, and thereby insure the Anglo-Saxon's imprint upon the region. Hoping to influence modern society, the two associations therefore used different tactics to popularize their inherited cultures. In the process preservationists helped to regenerate earlier traditions, secure Anglo-Saxon cultural hegemony, institutionalize a civil religion, and inspire traditionalist leaders through the lessons embodied in the preserved past. The societal perspectives of these preservationists, like those of many progressives, were limited, however, by their class interests and ethnocentrism. The Gospel of Preservation accordingly represented a prologue premised upon the class and cultural values of the preservationists.

KEY TO CITED ABBREVIATIONS FOR ARCHIVES

AAS	American Antiquarian Society
APVA	Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities
CWM	College of William and Mary, Swem Library, Archives and Special Collections
Duke	Duke University, Perkins Library, Manuscripts Department
LC	Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division
MHS	Massachusetts Historical Society
SPNEA	Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
UVA	University of Virginia, Alderman Library, Manuscripts Department
VHS	Virginia Historical Society
VM	Valentine Museum
VSL	Virginia State Library

THE GOSPEL OF PRESERVATION IN VIRGINIA AND
NEW ENGLAND: HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND
THE REGENERATION OF TRADITIONALISM

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of and motivations for the historic preservation movement have rarely been studied by historians. More often than not, preservationists have been dismissed as either an atavistic cult of little old ladies or a cultured club of gentlemen, either of which group had retreated into its history in order to escape the crush of modern-day society. As will be shown in this study, such a depiction and an explanation obscures the real efforts and works of preservationists to influence the course of American society. My focus will be the founders and leaders of two historic preservation associations which were privately established in the years immediately before or during the Progressive era. The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) was organized in Williamsburg in 1889 and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) was established in Boston in 1910. A central premise of this study is that historic preservation societies cannot be studied simply from the perspective of organizational dynamics, but need to be analyzed also within the societal and cultural movements which prompted their establishment and development.

Historic preservation work through the APVA and the SPNEA was part of a broader traditionalist resurgence within their respective regions which strove to restore order after the emergence of mass democracy, industrial capitalism, and a modernist way of life. As defined by these preservationists, the goal of historic preservation was the protection

of traditionalism in Virginia and New England: namely, a respect for and acceptance of the values, cultural norms, and heritage which had devolved from their Anglo-Saxon forebears of the colonial and revolutionary eras. Buildings and artifacts, when preserved, protected, and sanctified, served as powerful symbols of that inheritance. Historic preservationists in the APVA and the SPNEA, therefore, acted not only to defend their cultural history, but to ensure as well that it would be the predominant influence shaping the present and future.

When the APVA was organized in 1889 it was at the vanguard of a traditionalist renaissance within the Old Dominion. During the previous three decades proud Virginians had been humbled by the Civil War, Reconstruction, poverty, and despair. The hierarchical social system of Old Virginia, moreover, was being challenged both by blacks who wanted real freedom after the emancipation and by radical democrats, especially the interracial coalition forged by the Readjusters, who wanted to redefine the rights of property and the power of the common man in a modern Virginia. In response traditionalists worked through the APVA and other groups to protect their history, to regain their past dominance, and to ensure that Virginia remain anchored to the type of values, society, and heritage which they revered.

Although it was established a generation after the APVA's founding, the SPNEA likewise countered serious challenges to Anglo-Saxon traditionalism. The very identity of New England as the land of the Puritan and the Yankee was blurred as immigration, urbanization, and industrialization took their hold. The massive migration of Italians, Slavs, and other alien peoples brought polyglot cultures into New England's burgeoning cities. As industrialism increased its pace, traditionalists feared

moreover that the growth of trade unionism and a working-class consciousness would endanger not only their sacrosanct Protestant work ethic, but also their hopes that an earlier community where the roles of worker and master had been well defined could be restored. Accompanying the rampant urbanization which transformed some historic cities and neighborhoods into factory and immigrant districts was the rise of political machines which won offices through their appeals to workers and immigrants. Reacting to these ominous developments traditionalists preserved their historic buildings as symbols of the true New England, strove to convert the propertied classes to the Gospel of Preservation, and used cultural and educational institutions as catalysts to control the present and to protect their influence.

As they waged their cultural crusade, preservationists in the APVA and the SPNEA preached this Gospel of Preservation. Directed primarily at the upper and middle classes, the gospel's good news was that the security and success of their respective regions could indeed be assured, but only if society returned to the trusted traditions of the Anglo-Saxon past. Preservationists argued that society must reestablish the old work ethic, a respect for law, the primacy of morals, elite and professional leadership, and a host of traditional precepts to counter the present disorder and flux. The future progress and order of society, they contended, depended upon an acceptance of traditionalism. Accordingly, the study of history and the emulation of the object lessons and moralistic maxims which it offered became control mechanisms which traditionalists used to influence the present. Since academic historians had largely ignored the fields of historic preservation and material culture, those fields became the fiefs of antiquarians and traditionalists who tenden-

tiously used their materials. The buildings, sites, and artifacts of early Virginia and New England, as a result, became powerful symbols which preservationists used to defend traditionalism and to guarantee its future imprint upon America.

The general aims of these historic preservationists, therefore, were threefold. Acting from the beliefs that these traditions were both divinely sanctioned and immediately relevant to society, preservationists acted first to protect and maintain the visible symbols of those traditions, namely select buildings and sites of old-time Virginia and New England. Secondly, preservationists worked to unify the propertied and leadership classes through an acceptance of traditionalism and the Gospel of Preservation. Thirdly, preservationists believed that the preserved past and its traditions should be used to uplift and educate or, in other words, to discipline and control the immigrant, the worker, the freedman, and other citizens who challenged their conception of the American system. The preserved past, as a result, would act as a potent lever to move the present to conform to the past.

While the APVA and the SPNEA worked to fulfill these general aims, their methods of implementing the gospel were dramatically different. The Virginians used the preserved past as a moralistic and pedagogic lesson to inculcate a reverence for traditionalism. Consequently, the leaders of the APVA considered a building's architectural or structural qualities a relatively minor concern. They were most interested in stressing the values reified through the building, such as the pure morals, the determined leadership, and the sterling characters of the forebears associated with the edifice. The leaders of the SPNEA, on the other hand, considered historic preservation a profession and a science which

should incorporate archaeological methods, antiquarian fidelity, and innovative, businesslike management. Whereas the Virginians relied upon a romantic and a partisan usage of the past in order to defend traditionalism, the New Englanders used a scientific regimen and a subtle calculation in pursuit of the same goal.

As they preserved buildings and sites, the leaders of the APVA and the SPNEA suggested that their modern-day society, and especially the individual's character, should be reformed to accord with traditionalism. Preservationists praised their heroic ancestors and contended that the modern generations had grown selfish, flaccid, and materialistic. They idealized, moreover, the close-knit, preindustrial communities and claimed that the modern sense of privatism and the glorification of material success had detracted from the community spirit. All the while the face of America was being transfigured by the awesome changes accompanying industrial capitalism, urbanization, and modernization. Preservationists not only worked to provide role models for modern emulation and reform, but also aided the cause of the civil religion and one-hundred-percent Americanism.

While historic preservationists protected and sanctified the inherited Anglo-Saxon traditions, their work often reflected the tenor of other Progressive reformers who similarly labored to rekindle the values of an earlier era. The parameters of this study will accordingly be the Progressive era and the years which include the wellsprings for each organization and their direction into the 1920s. During these years preservationists and traditionalists joined hands with many reformers in a common cause of ensuring the cultural hegemony of Anglo-Saxon traditionalism. In the minds of these preservationists, the precepts

inherited from the past became not simply a prologue to the present,
but also a prescription for the future.

CHAPTER I

THE GOSPEL OF PRESERVATION

Historians have concluded almost in unison that the last decades of the nineteenth century were watershed years. Struggling to bring order to the new land, traditionalist Americans felt their nation rocked by unsettling changes associated with industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. Most Americans of this background viewed these changes with a certain ambivalence. While the apparent material progress and prosperity were appreciated, many traditionalists feared that America's Anglo-Saxon culture and colonial-era social values were jeopardized by the hectic flurry of events. Prompted by these anxieties and concerns, historic preservationists took public steps to preserve and popularize what in their estimation were America's heritage and historic commandments.

In their public campaigns to preserve Anglo-Saxon culture historic preservationists preached a Gospel of Preservation. While this study focuses solely on the work of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), the gospel was applicable to other similar-minded efforts. Believing that America's future stability and success rested upon an allegiance to old precepts, preservationists preached the gospel, organized societies, memorialized events, and preserved buildings which reified those values and customs. The Gospel of Preservation,

therefore, would enable future Americans to use the lamp of experience to light their way in the new land of factories, metropolises, and modernity. Since the Gospel of Preservation was shaped and defined by traditionalist groups, such as White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, First Families of Virginia, and Boston Brahmins, it became culture bound and ethnocentric. The gospel preserved their culture, met their needs, and insured that their families would be recognized as the custodians of culture. In essence the Gospel of Preservation was a complex mixture of historic preservation, education, inspiration, and social control. What it fashioned was a buttress for the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon culture in America.

Late Nineteenth-Century Background of the Preservationist Impulse

As the nation's population and culture became heterogeneous in the late 1880s and 1890s, the work of historical societies--preservationist, ancestral, and patriotic--gained more attention and support. Unlike the ancestral and patriotic organizations which were restricted to those of proper birth and breeding, historic preservation societies, notably the APVA and later the SPNEA, were public and ostensibly open to all those interested in preservation work and willing to pay dues. Their membership, nevertheless, was almost entirely WASP and middle to upper class. The common goal of these preservation organizations was the protection of important sites and buildings; through these efforts they would build a coalition of forces to include not only the affluent and educated, but also institutions such as schools, churches, and governments.

What brought this coalition together were the dramatic changes in Gilded-Age America, a period when "hardly any realm of American life remained untouched" by modernization and incorporation. Factories, immigrants, and metropolises, many preservationists feared, would jeopardize the older American values associated with farms, Anglo-Saxonism, and country towns. While often critical of this newer face of America, preservationists concentrated their efforts on saving buildings which reified the ideals, characteristics, and nobility of their ancestors. Since the Gilded Age and the Progressive period were marked by sharp socio-economic conflicts, these struggles over America's culture consequently took on the appearance of an ideological campaign or, as Alan Trachtenberg phrased it, a battle "over the meaning of the word 'America,' over the political and cultural authority to define the term and thus to say what reality was and ought to be." Out of this battle, and historic preservationists were just one of the combatants, emerged "a changed, more tightly structured society with new hierarchies of control, and also changed conceptions of that society itself."¹ Preservationists fought successfully, but with some compromises, to define the culture, act as its shepherd, and thereby influence the direction of American society.

Though the most profound reflection of incorporation was in the business sector, a neglected facet of the phenomenon was the vast growth in the number of organizations, like those devoted to historic preservation, founded either to protect traditional culture or reform society.

¹Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), pp. 5, 78, 3-4; for a continuity of this cultural struggle into the Progressive period, see Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order: 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), pp. 42-45.

"The last third of the nineteenth century," Samuel P. Hays explained, "was an era of popular schemes for remaking society, of simple solutions to complex problems, of endeavors to escape from industrial innovation rather than to come to grips with it." The nostrums proffered by traditionalists, accordingly, were simplistic because they feared any radical efforts; they only hoped to get America back on its traditional course. Moreover, America lacked the "institutions of general competence" which were needed to deal with the awesome changes, Robert H. Wiebe added. As a result, the reform organizations, like historic preservation, were generally voluntaristic, localistic, and single-issue oriented.²

Not only did traditionalists dread the collapse of what Wiebe called "island communities" in industrial America, they also reacted pessimistically to the onset of labor troubles and the economic shocks from a series of recessions and depressions in the 1880s and 1890s. They pictured, as did prominent preservationists, labor disturbances like Haymarket and Homestead as "a degeneration of virtue, a loss of those character traits of industry, regularity, and respect for order essential to the republic."³ Moreover, the "new immigration" beginning in the 1880s with its ethnic stocks so different from the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and

²Samuel P. Hays, The Response to Industrialism: 1885-1914 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 24; Robert H. Wiebe, The Segmented Society: An Introduction to the Meaning of America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 37. Wiebe and Hays are influenced by modernization theory and consequently view these traditionalists in a negative light.

³For the island community, see Wiebe, The Search for Order, Ch. 3; Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America, p. 71. Wiebe's "island communities" perhaps reflected little more than five percent of the population, yet their power and influence probably made them more visible; see Stephen Thernstrom, The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 228.

Teutonic peoples of earlier days left many with fears that alien forces were taking over America. Many conservative reformers argued, therefore, that unless workers and immigrants were educated and transformed through Anglo-Saxon models a "perpetual class strife" would result; "Americanize the immigrant in your image," they warned, "or run the risk of an enemy capturing him."⁴

As the apparent threats from labor and immigrant cultures increased, American traditionalists, especially in the 1890s, evinced a growing despair which soon overtook their customary optimism concerning progress. Until the 1890s, in fact, American thinkers generally were confident about their country's destiny. "Pessimism seems to have invaded American minds," John Higham conjectured, "only after the actual course of social change clearly refuted the liberating significance Americans had imparted to the evolutionary process. By 1890 the consolidation of big organizations, the massing of population, and the growing intensity of class conflict were inescapably apparent."⁵ Hence the need, as expressed by historic preservationists, for America to return to its past and restore the values, ideals, and attitudes which had earlier secured success and stability in society.

Historic preservationists were united also by class and economic ties. The Gospel of Preservation became a bridge to span the gap between

⁴Robert H. Wiebe, Businessmen and Reform: A Study of the Progressive Movement (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1962), p. 8.

⁵John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890's," in Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 92. See also Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 50.

old and new wealth and in unity assure the retention of Anglo-Saxon culture. Nevertheless, the organizers of these preservation movements, as custodians of culture, were largely from older, more established families whose wealth varied from the upper to the middle classes. While clearly not as wealthy or powerful as the famed "robber barons," preservationists sought that group's economic support and urged their recognition of cultural preservation as a tool to reform and shape a changing society. A number of historians, most prominently Richard Hofstadter, have hypothesized the economic decline of the old gentry and the rise of a new economic elite in the late nineteenth century:

In a score of cities and hundreds of towns, particularly in the East but also in the nation at large, the old-family, college-educated class that had deep ancestral roots in local communities and often owned family businesses, that had traditions of political leadership, belonged to the patriotic societies and the best clubs, staffed the governing boards of philanthropic and cultural institutions, and led the movements for civic betterment, were being over-shadowed and edged⁶ aside in the making of basic political and economic decisions.

While Hofstadter's description fits some of the leaders and advisors of the APVA and SPNEA to a tee, his allegation of an economic decline was far from a "revolution" and often not apparent. Although his sharp dichotomy between old and new wealth is more intriguing than factual, it does point to a reshuffling of both economic and political power. Most importantly, however, cultural control was more resistant to change and was firmly in the hands of American traditionalists.

The originators of historic preservation movements, specifically the APVA and SPNEA, were thus from established families, of middling to

⁶ Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 137. For a similar treatment of their motivation see Stow Persons, The Decline of American Gentility (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 277.

comfortable wealth, and prominent in social circles. Their supporters, on the other hand, were broader based, yet still within the propertied classes and identified with the Anglo-Saxon culture. The net result, however, was that America faced a rift in its culture and society. "Two worlds were being created," sociologist E. Digby Baltzwell noted, "one Protestant, rich and Patrician, the other containing the rest of America."⁷ The rising numerical strength of the immigrants contrasted sharply with that of the older, traditionalist Americans who felt overwhelmed and on the defensive.

As they sized up changes in America's landscape, traditionalists feared that their world was jeopardized principally by the downtrodden immigrant and less so by the ostentatious wealth of parvenus. "A decent world . . . where their standards were honored and their families secure," Wiebe explained the traditionalists' plight, "was either rapidly passing or had already disappeared. These feelings of danger and defeat . . . [foretold] a tidal wave that might sweep away all of legitimate society." To prevent this catastrophe traditionalists mounted a crusade for culture. Historic preservation became one offensive in that campaign; as traditionalists preserved the past they acted as "missionaries in the cause of culture."⁸

Historic preservation consequently mirrored the values and heritage of the traditionalists; it became culture bound to their classes and

⁷E. Digby Baltzell, The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy & Caste in America (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 42.

⁸Wiebe, The Search for Order, pp. 51-52; John Tomsich, A Genteel Endeavor: American Culture and Politics in the Gilded Age (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), p. 6.

groups. Though these gentry "subscribed to a distinct code of values, and . . . modeled their lives in accordance with the traditions of gentility," Stow Persons cautioned, "their position was not a birthright, either in theory or in practice." As with membership in historic preservation movements, "anyone could assume gentry status by conforming to the standards of gentility; newcomers were constantly being recruited." A standard of paramount importance in their campaigns was the promotion and defense of the "'middle-class home';" "every cultural object that entered the home," they felt, "was supposed to express the highest ideals and aspirations" of the American. Historic preservationists, and even antique collectors, countered their sense of social drift through this sanctification of domesticity. According to Elizabeth Stillinger, a student of the antique collecting movement, "solid Victorians fixed on the family, often symbolized by fireplace and hearth, as the most reliable and enduring institution of their age."⁹ Historic preservationists in the APVA and the SPNEA, likewise, constantly provided historical examples of a good home life, role models and domestic values.

When the leaders of the APVA and the SPNEA voiced the Gospel of Preservation, they also enunciated the ideas of classical liberalism about the roles of government and the individual in society. Classical liberalism was preeminently the instrument of the "best men" and enjoyed the support of most leading academics, professionals, journalists, and politicians. With their moral code firmly in the Protestant tradition,

⁹Persons, The Decline of American Gentility, p. 2; Tomsich, A Genteel Endeavor, p. 5; Elizabeth Stillinger, The Antiquers: The Lives and Careers, the Deals, the Finds, the Collections of the Men and Women Who Were Responsible for the Changing Taste in American Antiques, 1850-1930 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. 5.

John G. Sproat explained, liberal reformers "typically sought to convince businessmen that respect for traditional moral values produced material rewards as well as spiritual satisfaction. Only through moral rejuvenation, they insisted, could the United States fulfill its destiny."

Liberal reformers, and for that matter historic preservationists, worked to restore what they perceived to be the strong, heroic individualism and the harmonious society of an earlier epoch. Because his view of the world was "doctrinaire," the liberal reformer, like the historic preservationist, was "unable to come to terms with his age . . . [and] exaggerated its defects and overrated the past." Seeing Gilded-Age America "as a series of little morality plays, the liberal reformer instinctively stepped forward to play the role of Virtue."¹⁰ The backdrop for these morality plays was the preserved past with its historic buildings, heroic figures, and noble virtues.

Perhaps the most important premise of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century liberal reformers was a belief that a return to these old standards would restore harmony in politics, economics, and society. At the same time, however, classical liberalism was undergoing a reorientation which, in retrospect, created a perplexing irony in the idealistic plans of the reformers; that irony was the shift in the definition of freedom from moralistic notions to their contemporary accent on economic freedom. Whereas the first generation of the nineteenth century was most concerned with the morally free individual, the later generations of that century, according to Robert G. McCloskey, "were biased in favor of economic freedom to an almost obsessive degree" and essentially overlooked

¹⁰ John G. Sproat, "The Best Men": Liberal Reformers in the Gilded Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 9, 229, 274, 275.

"the less tangible, human values of democracy." With the rise of industrial capitalism "the old doctrine of the moral improvement of man [was changed] into a theory of material progress." As a result, the apostles of the Gospel of Success, and preservationists generally subscribed to their doctrine, were "able to weld capitalism to the democratic creed" and make it paramount.¹¹ The paradox which followed would intrigue later analysts; though the economic organization and structure of society had dramatically changed, traditionalists, including historic preservationists, continued to stress their belief that the old values and work habits would provide success and stability.

The reorientation of the concept of freedom was accompanied by an important struggle between the notions of individualism and community responsibility. "Conflicts between communalism and privatism, between social democracy and individual economic aspirations were severe," Michael Kammen recounted. "For a while the traditional ideal of philanthropic stewardship co-existed with the ethos of competitive acquisitiveness. But by the first decades of the twentieth century, two countervailing sorts of liberalism had begun to be polarized . . . laissez-faire liberalism versus welfare state liberalism." Historic preservationists, as measured by the leadership of the APVA and SPNEA, would support laissez-faire, or classical, liberalism. This clash between privatism and communalism, especially in the context of Social Darwinism, could be "brutal," William O'Neill observed, as "order, security, [and] brotherhood were all sacrificed for the sake of abstract and supposedly immutable doctrines

¹¹ Robert Green McCloskey, American Conservatism in the Age of Enterprise, 1865-1910 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1951), pp. 7, 12, 15.

benefiting the few at the expense of the many. Victorians equated wealth with virtue," he continued, "yet plainly the rich were seldom virtuous, and the virtuous seldom rich."¹² Though far from being cold and callous, preservationists, who were usually more wealthy or middle class than rich, stressed individualism and moral character as means to uplift society.

Equating success with virtue, discipline, and character, classical liberals and most preservationists leading the APVA and SPNEA stressed that individualistic solutions, not governmental ones, were the remedies for America's malaise. "Private competition among individuals, in which each man sought his own self-interest," Samuel Hays explained their belief, "would automatically produce the greatest social good."¹³ Government interference, or even that of labor unions, they felt, acted as an impediment and artificial influence which would lead to a diminution of workers' self-confidence, self-respect, and productivity. Historic preservationists as a result interpreted their buildings and heroes in this light: individualism was praised and governmental action defended only when it protected the freedom of the individual. Since they accented the importance of individual character, traditionalists reacted gingerly to the new science of Darwinism as applied to history, society, and the economy. The idea that a mechanistic universe made the individual impotent was particularly loathsome. As a result, "a deadly fear of mechanistic materialism," Henry May suggested, "lay in back of the intense doubts and

¹²Michael Kammen, People of Paradox: An Inquiry Concerning the Origins of American Civilization (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), p. 270; William L. O'Neill, The Progressive Years: America Comes of Age (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975), pp. 92, 93.

¹³Hays, The Response to Industrialism, p. 39.

hard-won affirmations of the great Victorian sages."¹⁴

Ancestral, patriotic, and historic preservation societies therefore offered a social surety, a cultural continuity, and a needed respite from the modern malaise. While some traditionalists turned to these historical pursuits as a therapy for their modern anxiety, many others saw them as offering a personal hold on history or a powerful lever to insure that their values, traditions, and, for some, leadership prevailed in society. Historic preservation leaders, as in the APVA and SPNEA, usually belonged to one or more of the other patriotic and ancestral societies. Some of these organizations, for example the Sons or Daughters of the American Revolution (SAR, DAR), sought not only to promulgate their own brand of patriotism, but also to provide a common badge or idiom for their common struggles against hyphenism and radicalism.¹⁵ Historic preservationists in Virginia commonly belonged to the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), the Colonial Dames of America, the DAR, and the SAR. The preservationists of New England commonly belonged to the SAR, DAR, Society of Colonial Wars, and the Sons of the Revolution (SR).

The formation of historic preservation organizations and patriotic societies was partly an outgrowth of the changes inherent in industrialism, capitalism, and nationalism as these forces challenged more traditional

¹⁴Henry F. May, The End of American Innocence: A Study of the First Years of Our Own Time, 1912-1917 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1959), p. 10.

¹⁵For the idea of a common idiom, see Robert H. Wiebe, The Segmented Society, p. 38. These groups formed what historian Thomas Bender called "communities of discourse" based on common interests and outlooks. Because they were select and exclusive communities their focus would be narrow and bound to their class or culture; see Bender, "The Culture of Intellectual Life: The City and the Professions," in New Directions in American Intellectual History, ed. by John Higham and Paul K. Conkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), pp. 181-195.

and localistic societies. Nationalism developed at a feverish pace in the 1890s and its revived patriotism pervaded society and culture. Flag ceremonies, the newly-contrived pledge of allegiance, and even martial music such as John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" (1897) and "Hands Across the Sea" (1899) melded well with historic preservation as it preserved Jamestown, Williamsburg, and colonial New England.

Historians of recent years have offered diverse interpretations of the motivations behind these patriotic and ancestral societies; did they reflect a status revolution, or anti-immigrant sentiments, or simply inflated nationalism? Richard Hofstadter conjectured in his "status revolution" theory that "many old-family Americans who were losing status in the present may have found satisfying compensation in turning to family glories of the past." A more caustic explanation has been propounded by E. Digby Baltzell. Attributing these movements to a reaction against the "heterogeneity and conflict" of the industrial city, Baltzell explained that they were "of course, intimately bound up with anti-immigrant and anti-semitic sentiments." Merle E. Curti, a historian of nationalism, claimed on the other hand, that these patriotic societies were an outgrowth of the nationalism of the centennial celebrations--principally those of 1876, 1881, and 1889--and were elitist and doctrinaire in philosophy. "Self-conscious nationalists," he noted, "believed that the glories of the past had not been adequately or systematically kept before the people, that the memory of the fathers must not again be allowed to fade. In forming patriotic organizations based on the principle of descent many leaders in the new movement expressed a certain snobbish pride in ancestry and sought to publicize their social prestige." Joining in a common cause with historic preservation, patriotic societies

preserved documents, erected monuments, published tracts, and inculcated "a particular concept of patriotism" in the schools and populace.¹⁶

Collectively considered, these three interpretations offer a revealing, yet still partial, explanation for the motivation behind the Gospel of Preservation. The status revolution, though more feared than real in the control of culture, brought like-minded traditionalist Americans together. The anti-immigrant feelings of preservationists, on the other hand, were more covert than public, although the latter did certainly exist. The doctrinaire and snobbish nationalism, finally, was ever present, but was counterbalanced by a provocative sense of localism.

The "particular concept of patriotism" held by patriotic, ancestral, and preservation societies was both culture- and class-bound. Advocating what would be later called "100 percent Americanism," they clamored for the Americanization of the immigrants and hyphenates. "The members of patriotic groups," conjectured Wallace E. Davies, "feared that these immigrants were all too permanent settlers who preserved foreign customs and ideas and failed to understand American institutions and ideals, which might soon be submerged." A measure of that fear, Peter Karsten added, was the patriot's determination to make the immigrants recognize George Washington as the "Father of their Country"; "Washington's worship by the long established Anglo-Saxon elites," he reasoned, was "a measure of that group's

¹⁶Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, p. 139n.; Baltzell, The Protestant Establishment, pp. 114, 115; Merle E. Curti, The Roots of American Loyalty (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), pp. 191-192, 193. This wave of nationalism in the 1890s and thereafter was not simply an American phenomenon. Occurring also in Europe, it was more indicative of a traditionalist response to industrial capitalism, than one wholly attributable to anti-immigrant sentiments, anti-radical hostility, or status consciousness; see Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890's," pp. 83-84.

anxiety about the future."¹⁷ Together these groups sought to secure the immigrant's loyalty and conformity to traditionalist culture and values. In such a way, they hoped, labor strikes, class radicalism, European-style socialism, and anarchy would be prevented.

These fears of lower-class radicalism continued to haunt America's traditionalist society into the first decades of the twentieth century. The viewpoints of liberal reformers, preservationists, and businessmen were alike in appraising this danger. Whereas the liberal reformers had dominated the later years of the nineteenth century, businessmen "set the temper of reform" during the Progressive years and "commanded primary prestige." According to Wiebe, "the social theory of the business community resembled in a general way the views of comfortable Americans everywhere. Its major tenets--a restricted definition of the people, a belief in leadership elite, a denial of classes, and a faith in individualism--all belonged to the standard philosophy of the early twentieth century." Another student of Progressive-era businessmen called the period from 1900 to 1916 "an era of conservatism."¹⁸ During that era business and

¹⁷ Wallace Evan Davies, Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 294; Peter Karsten, Patriot-Heroes in England and America: Political Symbolism and Changing Values over Three Centuries (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), pp. 92, 94; for the memorial worship of George Washington see Marcus Cunliffe, George Washington, Man and Monument (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958), Ch. 1. The APVA naturally was more concerned with its local son than the New Englanders of the SPNEA.

¹⁸ Hays, The Response to Industrialism, p. 22; Wiebe, Businessmen and Reform, p. 204; Gabriel Kolko, The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916 (New York: The Free Press

political leaders rallied to preserve the capitalist economic and political system from radical attacks.

Evidence of the reformist, yet conservative, accent of the Progressive era was the paramount importance given to education as a tool to stabilize society. In a complex blend of idealism and realism, progressives and preservationists alike realized that schooling could be an influential mechanism to control the populace. Seen as the cure for many ills, education would uplift the lower orders and, at the same time, make them more tranquil, obedient, and respectful of authority. As a result, progressivism "took the form of a comprehensive educational revival."¹⁹ While supporting increased attention on the school's curriculum, preservationists also invited teachers to bring students to their historical museums and sites. Preserved buildings and heroes, and especially the values which they reified, would be subjects for emulation and

of Glencoe, 1963), p. 282. Although both examined businessmen and progressivism, the differences between Wiebe and Kolko are substantial. While Wiebe considered his small-scale businessmen as "enemies of the progressives" (p. 211), Kolko, on the other hand, claimed that large-scale businessmen were allies of the progressives. The most important point for this study, however, is their agreement that businessmen advocated a general philosophy of a harmonious, elite-led society which prized the individual moral character and saw the necessity for social controls to insure stability. For a recent discussion on the vagaries of the period and the inexactness of the term "progressive," see Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," Reviews in American History 10 (December 1982): 113-132.

¹⁹ Ruth Welter, Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 264. The most thorough treatment of the didactic content of earlier popular schooling is Ruth M. Elson, Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964).

inspiration and would teach children the virtues of work, obedience, and responsibility. Historic preservation, reflecting the particular viewpoint of these propertied and Anglo-Saxon preservationists, became one of the many tools to reform society and to insure traditionalist social stability. The Gospel of Preservation, therefore, was carried to the near and far, the immigrant and native, the poor and the propertied, and defined an agenda for future American culture.

Culture and the Gospel of Preservation

Historic preservation movements and their goals are inextricably linked to the formative culture of society and the personal philosophies of preservationists. Since late nineteenth-century Virginia and early twentieth-century New England experienced periods of social flux, determined efforts were made, partly through historic preservation, to stabilize and incorporate the inherited culture.²⁰ Unlike earlier preservation efforts which were localistic and narrowly focused, the APVA (1889) and the SPNEA (1910) were ambitious and open-ended in their commitments. While their members joined for many reasons, one strong common denominator would be their belief in the Gospel of Preservation.

Since it was premised upon the belief that earlier American virtues, traditions, and role models were superior and therefore worthy of restoration, the Gospel of Preservation was a telling reflection of

²⁰ According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, culture "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life," "Religion as a Cultural System," in The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), p. 89. Other examples of the incorporation of culture were historical societies, art museums, and libraries.

the values, perspectives, and class identities of the elite Virginians and New Englanders who put their stamp on these organizations. Historic architecture was seen as both artifact and symbol; the APVA and the SPNEA each used it as a tool to impress upon their own contemporaries the notion that colonial artistry should be praised, pioneer virtues admired, and noble ancestors emulated. Virginians used it not only to restore the tarnished image of the Old Dominion, but also to inspire the courage and conviction needed to reorder Virginia's society and economy after the tumult of Reconstruction, Readjusterism, and emancipation. New Englanders, on the other hand, promoted the gospel to rally the patriots, protect their Anglo-Saxon heritage and values, and document the historic past. In the course of these diverse struggles, the Gospel of Preservation manifested religious appearances as it buttressed the civil religion; legendary patriots became saints and preserved historic sites became shrines of worship. Historic preservationists, therefore, were not only shepherds of America's dominant culture, but also deacons of its civil religion. Not surprisingly, preservationists called their work the most sacred trust.

The philosophy of these historic preservation movements, albeit never codified as such, was the Gospel of Preservation. Fervently believing that the protection of the past was a requisite for the future success and stability of society, historic preservationists waged a "cultural crusade" to counter what appeared to be a cultural malaise. Previous historic preservation movements generally had been formed on an ad hoc basis and as "rear-guard actions" to save a jeopardized building. As a result, Charles Hosmer, a historian of the movement noted, "the literature on preservation philosophy is almost nonexistent. Perhaps

these people have been guided by instinct more than by reason as each crisis has come along." If these actions were guided by instinct, as Hosmer suggested, it is all the more important for historians to study the lives, beliefs, and related works of the principal preservationists to uncover their rationale and motivation. Since preservationists used architecture as a symbol, moreover, their interpretation and use of historic structures would be a further indication of their preservation philosophy.²¹

The central proposition of the Gospel of Preservation was the conviction that the past must be a guide to the present and future. Since preservationists were often disenchanted with the moral tone of their own day, the past became a model for more honest and temperate lives. However, when their romanticized views of the past were contrasted with their culture-bound views of the changing present, disillusionment was probably inevitable. As J. H. Plumb phrased it, traditionalists facing the throes

²¹Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), p. 25; Hosmer, "The Broadening View of the Historic Preservation Movement," in Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. by Ian M. G. Quimby (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 121. Hosmer's estimation of an "ad hoc" approach is a contrast with organizations like the APVA and the SPNEA which were formed to protect buildings. Generally his studies chronicle the public actions of preservationists. Cultural historians such as John William Ward, however, warn that historians must probe beneath the surfaces of these actions. "The proper subject of the historian is not the fact of an actor (the event, if one will)," he noted, "but the processes of thought which go on in the mind of the actor which are disclosed in, and establish the meaning of that action"; see his Red, White, and Blue: Men, Books, and Ideas in American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 4. Though there may be a "temptation to upgrade inappropriately the degree of coherence," Lawrence Veysey added, these ideas must be codified as "it is the central and legitimate aspect of the intellectual historian's labors to explicate, or bring out, the implications in a line of thought that a writer could not himself fully discern at one time"; see his "Intellectual History and the New Social History," in New Directions in American Intellectual History, p. 21.

of change turn more and more to history and "the past becomes the theatre of life." Americans have generally preserved and used the past for their own present needs, Robin Winks explained: "that which we teach, that which we say, those things which we preserve, must be relevant and invariably relevant to some future point. The past must be usable," he added, "it must help define future goals for the nation."²² This American tendency moreover was institutionalized through the Gospel of Preservation.

Not only was the gospel an exclusive and selective message, it was also promulgated by private organizations. Preservation associations, such as the APVA and SPNEA, were legally chartered corporations; their properties became tax-exempt, moreover, as the state governments openly sympathized with their work and philosophy. At a time when the federal and state governments had a very limited involvement in historic preservation, private organizations, which naturally reflected the concerns of their particular classes and groups, led the way in the preservation and popularization of culture. Confronting "the centrifugal and disorderly tendencies of the political and economic marketplace," these private corporations of culture, such as museums and historical societies, assumed the task of "shaping the ideological framework and intellectual instruments through which reality was defined and acted on."²³

²²J. H. Plumb, The Death of the Past (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, Sentry Edition, 1970), p. 26; Robin Winks, "Conservation in America: National Character as Revealed by Preservation," in The Future of the Past: Attitudes to Conservation, 1174-1974, ed. by Jane Fawcett (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1976), p. 142.

²³Peter Dobkin Hall, The Organization of American Culture, 1700-1900: Private Institutions, Elites, and the Origins of American Nationality (New York: New York University Press, 1982), p. 1.

The cultural crisis of the late nineteenth century led to a strident preaching of the Gospel of Preservation. Noting that the era was pivotal for its effects on modern culture, John William Ward in fact compared the America of that day with eighteenth-century Germany. "Both are moments of awareness of the need to establish general order in a society threatened by disorder and discontinuity," he explained. "The idea of culture is itself a response to historical moments of challenge to the conditions which support a generally shared system of meaning and ideals in human community." These challenges to culture became particularly acute in America as industrialism, capitalism, and mass democracy shook the nation's more traditional moorings. "The idea of culture," Raymond Williams observed, "is a record of our reactions in thought and feeling, to the changed conditions of our common life. Our meaning of culture," he underscored, "is a response to the events which our meanings of industry and democracy most evidently define."²⁴

The definition and character of a culture are further shown by the ideas and actions of its custodians. According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, culture should be viewed through its semiotic context. Arguing that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun," Geertz considered culture to be those webs and its articulation to be man's behavior. Therefore, and this point must be stressed, artifacts such as those protected by historic preservationists "draw their meaning from the role they play . . . in an ongoing pattern of life, not from any

²⁴Ward, Red, White and Blue, pp. 16-17; Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1958), p. 295.

intrinsic relationships they bear to one another."²⁵ Culture, as a result, can neither be separated from the changes in society and economy nor from the preservationists who personally protect and interpret it.

Historic preservation, moreover, was one tool wielded by the dominant classes to reaffirm their control during this period of continuous change. As Williams noted, widespread change in society leads the dominant groups to look back on the "general designs of that culture," or in this case those of the colonial and revolutionary periods; the subsequent protection of culture "is a slow reach again for control." Yet a traditional culture is always more than the product of a single class, and hence the inaccuracy of such terms as "bourgeois culture." Nevertheless, "a dominant class can to a large extent control the transmission and distribution of the whole common inheritance." As in the operations of the historic preservation movement, "a tradition is always selective, and . . . there will always be a tendency for this process of selection to be related to and even governed by the interests of the class that is dominant."²⁶

Culture is obviously not a neutrally defined inheritance. The traditions which it embodies present "an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present" which is "powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification." As a result, these traditions are "actively shaping force[s]" in determining the values and priorities of society. What they provide

²⁵Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in The Interpretation of Cultures, pp. 5, 7; see also Ward, Red, White, and Blue, p. 8.

²⁶Williams, Culture and Society, pp. 295, 320, 321-322.

moreover is a "sense of predisposed continuity" whereby culture is used "to connect with and ratify the present."²⁷ In so doing, the authority and social standing of dominant groups, such as traditionalists, are firmly buttressed by the past. The custodians of culture, including historic preservationists, thereby selectively used cultural symbols and artifacts to reinforce the dominance of Anglo-Saxon traditionalism.

Traditionalists and preservationists waged a two-fronted campaign to assure the hegemony of their culture. The principal object of their efforts was the solidification of the propertied classes through an acceptance of traditionalism. Support for historic preservation, and traditional culture generally, became a badge of respectability, authority, and cultural continuity for the newly emerging wealth in the upper and middle classes. Custodians of genteel culture argued that these parvenus must be uplifted. Although preservationists appealed to the propertied classes in general, traditional culture primarily became "a tool for enlightening and civilizing the middle classes."²⁸ In didactic tones they attempted to instill values, traditions, and manners in these ascending groups. After all things were considered, these genteel preservationists preached that old and new wealth must coalesce against the most threatening enemy of culture, the masses.

The second thrust in their cultural crusade, therefore, opposed the rapidly expanding masses of immigrants, workers, blacks, and radicals. The goal, often more covert than inflamed, was to discipline, control,

²⁷ Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 115, 116.

²⁸ Tomsich, A Genteel Endeavor, p. 24.

and if possible, "civilize" these lower orders of society. In the late nineteenth century, Alan Trachtenberg noted, "culture was represented increasingly as the antidote to unruly feeling, to rebellious impulses, and especially to such impulses showing themselves with more frequency, as the years went on, among the lower orders. The conjunction of culture with wealth and property on the one hand," he continued, "with surrender, self-denial, and subordination to something larger on the other, gave it a cardinal place among instruments of social control and reform." Culture in this context "would offer an alternative to class hostility. It would disarm potential revolution, and embrace all classes."²⁹

These new masses were seen by the genteel classes as a threat to the integrity of the individual, the security of the home, and the continuity of their heritage. According to Raymond Williams, the masses were a continual threat to traditional culture. "Mass thinking, mass-suggestion, mass-prejudice would threaten to swamp considered individual thinking and feeling." The paramount model of propriety, individuality, and civility for late nineteenth-century traditionalists and preservationists would be the home and domesticity. New immigrants and poor workers were expected to uphold the standards of the traditional American home. "An image of the cultured home as middle ground, a domestic island of virtue and stability" became the defense for traditionalists against the "cultural proletarianization looming as threat and menace." Hence, this campaign of "pacification through culture" promoted home and hearth as "the official image of America."³⁰ As the home became the symbol of

²⁹Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America, p. 147.

³⁰Williams, Culture and Society, p. 298; Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America, p. 149.

domestic stability and peace for preservationists, the symbols for public order and security were the historic buildings associated with the government and church. An older American scene, therefore, provided the cultural props to inspire newer Americans to accept an order and tradition as defined by the dominant groups.

During the cultural crisis of the 1890s and early 1900s more Americans turned to historical studies, including preservation movements, for reasons running the gamut from self-interest to societal concern. Preservation movements were partly a defense of genteel culture or inherited status against a mass society. Most preservationists considered it to be a sacred trust. Fewer preservationists, especially those actually involved in the technical work, saw it as personal therapy in a hurly-burly world. The common denominator among them, however, was a fear that an older concept and definition of America, or locally Virginia and New England, were being lost in the throes of change. "It is not accidental," observed J. H. Plumb, "that great social crises, when secular authority or ancient beliefs are torn in conflict, bring forth a huge spate of historic writing and, indeed, historical controversy." As with the founders of the APVA and the SPNEA, "the past has always been the handmaid of authority," he explained, as dominant groups strove to produce a "secure and usable past." Powerful groups generally determine the heroes to be admired and the events to be celebrated, Peter Karsten added in substantiating Plumb's theory: "the elite tenaciously control the culture's vision of the past."³¹

³¹Plumb, The Death of the Past, pp. 40, 41; Karsten, Patriot-Heroes, p. 166.

Historic preservation for some was an offshoot of genealogical and family history. Inspired partly by the study of evolution and its concentration on the stages of development, genealogy more often was a lever to be used against the new mass society. "The personal ownership of the past," Plumb observed, "has always been a vital strand in the ideology of all ruling classes." In fact, during times of changing class status, "all aristocracies have, very sensibly, made a cult of genealogy in order to underpin their special status." Since their underlying notion of history was selective and narrow, genealogically minded preservationists concentrated almost solely on their ancestors and folkways and then presented these findings as local or regional history. This acquisition of the past by the ruling and propertied groups, Plumb continued, was generally accompanied by "the exclusion of the mass of the peasantry and labouring class" because, quite simply, "workers and ancestors do not mix."³² As a result, historic preservation when motivated by genealogical concerns, and the case was frequent with both the APVA and the SPNEA, tended to be biased and exclusive. Instead of national or local history as its subject, it became the story of the leading families.

Status concerns, when shaped by inherited prestige, drew further adherents to the preservationist cause. Status concerns, in fact, have been a frequent occurrence during times of societal change. "There are shifts of power from time to time in the governing class of any nation," Plumb commented, "and those who lose tend to romanticize the past in order to compensate themselves for what they no longer enjoy, often at

³²Plumb, The Death of the Past, pp. 30, 31. Clifford Geertz has noted a long-held proposition in anthropology that "ancestor worship supports the jural authority of elders"; see his "Religion as a Cultural System," in The Interpretation of Cultures, p. 88.

the same time denouncing the decadence, the corruption of the times in which they have to live." The growth of patriotic and ancestral groups during these days of industrial and political tumult, Richard Hofstadter conjectured, was related to a status revolution in the country. These old-family Americans who joined the historical societies "may have found satisfying compensation in turning to family glories of the past."³³ Although status concerns--personal prestige and recognition--were important for some preservationists, any overarching thesis, such as Hofstadter's, tends more to obfuscate than clear the matter. Status was a personal interest; the larger and more substantive issue was who controlled the society's culture and thereby influenced the future.

The rhetoric of historic preservationists often echoed the popular notion of a sacred trust, either to nation, state, or culture. This duty, in fact, became the "center of national meaning" in the nineteenth century, Paul Nagel observed. It interwove with "education, religion, literature, and motherhood" as traditionalists labored, especially at the fin de siècle, to regenerate national morality.³⁴ The women and men who organized the APVA reiterated the trust as their motivation to action. In New England Harvard College inculcated the mission in its students, including SPNEA-founder William Sumner Appleton, when it encouraged a "transgenerational maintenance of place" through elite institutions. Seeking "to evoke a sense of permanence through memorials which would stand up against 'all vicissitudes,'" Harvardians formed institutions

³³Plumb, The Death of the Past, p. 48; Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, p. 139n.

³⁴Paul C. Nagel, This Sacred Trust: American Nationality, 1798-1898 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. xi, xv.

such as historical societies, museums, and clubs which "became a counter-weight to social flux and intergenerational mobility. For the domineering yet anxious elite, the cultural constellation served as conservative traditionalism served other countries--as a 'center,' so to speak, 'that would hold.'" The sacred trust, therefore, became a mission to protect not only American culture, but as importantly, to retain an elite hold on it. As the trust diminished and colonial memories waned, remarked Wesley Craven, "the fault was attributed . . . to the failure of older America stocks to do what they could to keep that memory alive."³⁵

Anglo-Saxonism was an integral facet of that sacred trust and a strong impetus for the organization of historic preservation societies in Virginia and New England. At a time when Anglophobia was rife in the nation, the patriotic, ancestral, and historic societies of the East Coast became a nucleus, in the words of John Philip Sousa, for a "hands across the sea" effort. These societies, according to a historian of the patriotic movement, "welcomed friendlier relations between the two English-speaking nations and declared that their common ideals and aims made an informal alliance both natural and desirable."³⁶ Though historic "preservation was an Anglo-Saxon movement," Charles Hosmer admitted, its

³⁵ Ronald Story, The Forging of an Aristocracy: Harvard & the Boston Upper Class, 1800-1870 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1980), p. 166; Wesley Frank Craven, The Legend of the Founding Fathers (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, Cornell Paperbacks, 1956), pp. 164-165.

³⁶ Davies, Patriotism on Parade, p. 316; for American hostility to Britain, see Edward P. Crapol, America for Americans: Economic Nationalism and Anglophobia in the Late Nineteenth Century (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973).

"literature does not contain any outspoken nativist declarations."³⁷ Its publications, after all, were intended for the more genteel in the middle and upper classes. Venomous attacks on immigrants and aliens did not accord well with the cultivated ladies of the APVA or the proper Bostonians of the SPNEA. Their private correspondence, on the other hand, was often more revealing; derogatory comments about the immigrants and non-Anglo-Saxons were far from infrequent.

The financial base for historic preservation in Virginia and New England was not only Anglo-Saxon, but also affluent and propertied. The two organizations relied for the most part on individual contributions, and the extant lists of contributors were largely of Anglo-Saxon heritage. Contributions to historic preservation came generally from the old upper class and the new middle class, not from the Fords or Rockefellers. Prior to 1930, Charles Hosmer concluded, "people of great wealth seldom saved historic sites [and] the major group of contributors came from the newly-emerging 'upper middle class.'" Both the APVA and SPNEA had a handful of affluent friends who contributed frequently and generously. In this era of the "quantitative ethic," Robert Wiebe generalized, philanthropy was essentially transformed into a "type of purchase."³⁸ As preservationists

³⁷Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 301. The author conjectured instead that "preservationists spent their time trying to educate immigrants, rather than condemning the newcomers." (p. 302). Like the APVA and the SPNEA, though, preservationists "had few formal contacts with schools." (p. 300). Both groups were too genteel generally for the actual task of immigrant education. Preservationists usually protected and popularized the historical models and values which were then evangelized by their allies in schools and publishing. Preservationists, therefore, only indirectly spoke to the lower classes; the middle and upper classes were their principal audience.

³⁸Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., "Private Philanthropy and Preservation," in Historic Preservation Today: Essays Presented to the Seminar on Preservation and Restoration (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966), p. 163; Wiebe, The Search for Order, p. 40.

searched for operating and purchasing funds, William Sumner Appleton typically and openly played on these feelings by advertising preservation as a benefaction deserving publicity and recognition. Since these preservation groups were incorporated and chartered by their respective states, their fund-raising tactics were tacitly recognized and their goals implicitly endorsed by these governments.

In the selection and interpretation of their buildings and sites historic preservationists were partly influenced by the popular myths of their day. According to the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, myths are fundamentally important in shaping a people's attitudes and sense of history; it is "'not by its history that the mythology of a nation is determined, but, conversely, its history is determined by its mythology.'" Tragic consequences, however, may result if these myths overcome a sense of reality. George Tindall noted that these include "a danger of illusion, a danger that in ordering one's view of reality, the myth may predetermine the categories of perception, rendering one blind to things that do not fit into the mental image."³⁹ Myths are also powerful in inciting a people to act according to certain precepts; the inspirational content of myths may "embody an important 'lesson' or 'moral,' which people are perhaps less likely to violate because of its embodiment in a cherished myth." A historian should turn these myths around, moreover, as they offer sharp insights into the values and attitudes of their proponents. "For the investigator," observed sociologist W. Lloyd Warner in

³⁹ Ernst Cassirer quoted in Rollin G. Osterweis, The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973), p. 3; George B. Tindall, "Mythology: A New Frontier in Southern History," in The Ethnic Southerners (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), p. 23. Tindall noted that the South was "unusually susceptible to mythology."

his study of a mythical New England city, "these symbols of things past provide a long shaft sunk deep into the dark interior of the mental life of Yankee City."⁴⁰ In the context of historic preservation, therefore, myths are important as bases for history and identity, as inspiring models for values and actions, and perhaps as impediments to reasoned thought.

A phenomenon which brought some Virginians and New Englanders into historic preservation was antimodernism and the therapy which it provided for the hectic pace of modernity. Some preservationists experienced a sense of ease, identity, and nostalgia for the earlier days when they visited or restored an older building. In good part a reflection of the havoc wrought by industrial capitalism, antimodernism "pervaded the middle and upper classes" of the day. Its advocates often coexisted "with enthusiasm for material progress" and portrayed "a complex blend of accommodation and protest" concerning the modern world. When they adopted premodern symbols such as colonial buildings and artifacts, they attempted both "to salvage meaning and purpose amid the crumbling Protestant culture" and to provide "a therapy" for tired and confused individuals.⁴¹

Occupying influential positions in society, the antimodernists

⁴⁰Willmore Kendall and George N. Carey, The Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), pp. 18-19; W. Lloyd Warner, The Living and the Dead; A Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 112. Warner's study ranks among the best sociological works on American symbols, myths, and values. Another treatment, though highly uneven in quality, is James O. Robertson, American Myth, American Reality (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980).

⁴¹T. J. Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. xiii.

"exercised crucial cultural power" and, as with historic preservation generally, "helped WASP elites to become a unified and self-conscious ruling class." Premodern symbols were used as ideological supports in their contemporary struggles for "cultural hegemony" and class leadership. Antimodernism, according to Lears, was also "part of a broader shift from a Protestant to a therapeutic orientation within the dominant culture. Far from constituting a 'revolution,' that shift promoted new modes of accommodation to routinized work and bureaucratic rationality."⁴² Therefore, antimodernists, and many historic preservationists were in those ranks, chose not to challenge the hold of industrialism or capitalism but instead sought personal identity and therapy through historical work. For them the Gospel of Preservation became more personal than social, more therapeutic than reformist. It nonetheless enabled the leading classes to coalesce around the memories of a preserved colonial past and to use that past for their modern purposes.

Historic preservationists, antimodernists, and conservatives together used architecture as the most potent symbol for the old values and order of America.⁴³ Unlike much of the contemporary construction, colonial buildings, for example, were considered to be honest, rugged, simple, strong, and even humane. Buildings, after all, personified the people who built and dwelled in them. According to Allen Guttman, American

⁴²Lears, *No Place of Grace*, pp. xv, 301, xvi. This author gives special attention to two men influential in the building of the SPNEA: Charles Eliot Norton, William Sumner Appleton's Harvard mentor; and Ralph Adams Cram, architect and SPNEA trustee.

⁴³Clifford Geertz briefly defined symbol as "any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception"; see "Religion As a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 91. Symbols possess their most powerful appeal when arranged in systems, such as a historic house museum.

conservatism as an ideology generally relied on "architectural metaphors" as "its cardinal images of value." Like historic preservationists in the APVA and the SPNEA, conservatives concentrated on the colonial era's domestic lives. "The home, especially, is its visible symbol of tradition, of permanence, of man's mastery of the primary environment of civilization." While industrial America chose the machine for its symbol, Guttman continued, conservatives chose the house because it contained "'the sense of the past.'" What shocked historic preservationists most, therefore, was the callousness of many Americans toward these symbols of the past; this "carelessness" toward tradition and precedent, Henry Steele Commager claimed, was "the most pervasive and persistent quality in the American."⁴⁴

Historic buildings, therefore, were symbols or metaphors for superior values, pure aesthetics, solid craftsmanship, and traditional leadership. Since historic preservation developed regionally to meet certain needs, the Gospel of Preservation reflected these different accents, localisms, and priorities. The APVA preserved Virginia's heritage as an inspiration for the present and as proof of the Old Dominion's greatness. The SPNEA, on the other hand, accented the superior aesthetics, artistry, and culture of its Yankee forebears. Both nonetheless used the past to speak to the present; their particular gospels stressed the need to drink from the wellsprings of the past to be able to face the demands of the present day.

By preserving shrines and memorials, preservationists consequently hoped to improve the moral tone of society. Convinced that "a visit to one of these shrines would automatically make one a better person," preservationists labored to create models and tools to regenerate American

⁴⁴Allen Guttman, The Conservative Tradition in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 49, 50; Commager, The American Mind, p. 17.

culture. Since preservation groups "had few formal contacts with schools," they targeted their gospel at the upper and middle classes who influenced society. In their reasoning history "became an antidote for the materialistic ills of the present" and, like the period in which they worked, preservationists "began to talk much like progressives."⁴⁵

The philosophy imparted through the Gospel of Preservation was a curious mixture of self-help and self-control combined with an acceptance of leadership by the responsible, the professional, and the traditional elite. Rationalized through a careful use of American history and its symbols, discipline could be imposed from within and above the individual. Interrelated with the Protestant idea of personal salvation, notions of self-help were commonly used in that day as an antidote for radicalism or social and economic democracy. When social convulsions erupted in America from 1890 through 1917, these doctrines were "refurbished . . . and used . . . against levellers" and radicals.⁴⁶ Historic preservationists in Virginia and New England revitalized those ideas, believing that only through self-discipline and societal controls could their America find stability.

A popular device to refurbish traditional values, used by preservationist and traditionalist alike, was the exaltation of past heroes; their image of these greats, however, was a mixture of truth and myth. Popular

⁴⁵Hosmer, "The Broadening View of the Historic Preservation Movement," p. 123; Presence of the Past, pp. 299, 300. Hosmer's focus is on the benevolent concerns of preservation. Clearly the motivation of preservationists was more complex and included a heavy dose of social control. Preservationists protected and interpreted a past which implied--and to a lesser extent stated--the contemporary necessity of Americanizing immigrants, disciplining the work force, and regenerating traditional leadership.

⁴⁶Irwin G. Wyllie, Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 154.

heroes, including John Smith, George Washington, and Paul Revere, usually filled the stereotype for a hero. According to Dixon Wecter, a student of American hero-making, these characters were "self-respecting, decent, honorable" individuals who exemplified "a mother wit and resourcefulness." Although they showed "a sense of fair play," they were "firm and self-confident in leadership." The taboos of vanity, arrogance, and "effeminacy" were absent from their characters. Lastly, he observed, "hard work, tenacity, enterprise, and firmness in the face of odds are the qualities that Americans most admire, rather than originality or eloquence of tongue and pen."⁴⁷ These heroes naturally were of the highest calibre; they proved that the individual shaped history, and that character shaped the individual.

Emulation of these heroes would influence not only the lower orders to be more disciplined, hard-working, and patriotic, but, as importantly, the traditional leadership classes to accept their duty and strengthen the resolve needed to regenerate America. This call to the educated, the propertied, and the professional was common during the Progressive period as they were urged to acknowledge their personal obligation to society. America needed them, Wiebe explained, "to ensure morality and efficiency and to provide education for the masses." The government must be led, progressives claimed, not by bosses and politicians, but by "'public men'--disinterested, unselfish, above the struggles for advantage and gain, able to survey the whole of America and act rationally in its behalf."⁴⁸ Preservationists in Virginia, for example, reiterated this calling and

⁴⁷Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 482-485.

⁴⁸Wiebe, Businessmen and Reform, p. 9.

asked that the modern Patrick Henrys and John Marshalls step forward to free the Old Dominion from the grips of Readjusters, Populists, and integrationists.

Besides inspiring a sense of duty, historic preservationists often kindled higher appreciation for craftsmanship and artistry. The arts and crafts movement paralleled historic preservation at the time and, like historic preservation, appealed to the middle and upper classes. While the arts movement concerned itself with uplifting public taste, the crafts movement endeavored to build moral character through skilled crafts. Crafts leaders, according to Lears's studies, sought to revive "sobriety, discipline, and hard work" and held a "deep suspicion of luxury, leisure, and sensual self-indulgence." Their advocacy of the simple, republican life "was less a rejection of modernity than a means of revitalizing the modern morality of self-control during a period of social and psychic stress."⁴⁹ For some then, craftsmanship, like historic preservation, became a blend of personal therapy and societal reform.

The Gospel of Preservation furthermore became a lynchpin in the civil religion of the late nineteenth century. Though this civil religion had deep roots, dating as far back as the American Revolution and possibly the Puritan colonies, it took on a striking appearance in the 1890s. The societal crises of that day, Wiebe noted, brought on "a hectic campaign to instill patriotism through worship of the Constitution, the flag, and America's heroes." The civil religion was influenced by many groups, including traditionalists, preservationists, veterans, and politicians. Although no one group dominated the religion, Michael Kammen observed, "public life acquired secular-religious appurtenances:

⁴⁹Lears, No Place of Grace, pp. 76-77.

a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals; patriotic days of reverence on which public figures reminded their audience of the mission of 'our American ISRAEL.'"⁵⁰

A civil religion is composed of four fundamental elements: ideology, saints, commemorative events, and rituals; historic preservationists in the APVA and SPNEA were active in varying degrees with all four aspects. The ideology, represented in the symbols of site and architecture, was articulated through the interpretations--in print and in person--given by preservationists. The saints naturally were the historical heroes, such as Washington, Marshall, and Revere, who embodied the values and characteristics worthy of emulation. The important events to be commemorated, such as Jamestown Day in Virginia and Lexington-Concord Day in New England, represented the confluence of heroes and ideology at some pivotal point. Lastly, rituals joined idea, saint, and event through various ceremonies, parades, and commemorations. The ritual could be individualistic, such as a personal visitation to a historic shrine, or communal as different groups came together to honor the past. Although some scholars have equated the civil religion with a "religious nationalism" where the nation is the "object of adoration and glorification," it is more accurate that the focus of worship was not the nation per se, but the ideals, values, experiences, heroes, and destiny of America, as embodied in the nation and

⁵⁰Wiebe, The Search for Order, p. 57; Kammen, People of Paradox, pp. 270-271. Like Kammen, most analysts of civil religion are indebted to Robert N. Bellah, whose contributions are later developed in Chapter VI. See also Davies, Patriotism on Parade, pp. 215-216.

its people.⁵¹

Historic preservationists in the APVA and SPNEA were active in the civil religion as they energetically strove to preserve shrines, graves, and artifacts which reified the virtues and values prized by civil religionists. Though the APVA was more involved than the SPNEA with the preservation of graves, preservationists generally considered it their task to protect burial grounds. Cemeteries and graves are "powerful sacred symbols," W. Lloyd Warner noted, "which organize, direct, and constantly revive the collective ideals of the community and nation." Ceremonies held in these cemeteries to honor patriots, pioneers, or illustrious ancestors, moreover, "are rituals comprising a sacred symbol system which functions periodically to integrate the whole community." In this process, the custodians of culture, such as historic preservationists, were recognized as leaders or shepherds of the community. These rituals and ceremonies, furthermore, reflected what Dixon Wecter labeled hero worship. The United States had become, he claimed, "the premier nation of hero-worshippers"; our secular civil religion in fact has become a "fetishism" for objects, including buildings and artifacts, related to these heroes. "To us," he concluded, "souvenirs are what holy relics were to the Middle Ages. The beds our heroes slept in, the clothes they wore, the houses they dwelt in," draw countless "pilgrims" each year.⁵²

⁵¹ Donald G. Jones and Russell E. Richey, "The Civil Religion Debate," in American Civil Religion, ed. by Jones and Richey (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), p. 16. Robert N. Bellah rejects the notion that the nation per se is the object of worship; see his "Civil Religion in America," in Religion in America, ed. by William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), pp. 3-23.

⁵² Warner, The Living and the Dead, pp. 279, 248; Wecter, The Hero in America, pp. 1, 9.

The American civil religion has consecrated the myths associated with the colonial period, the American Revolution, and American destiny. As Ernst Cassirer has noted, myth, history, and religion become inseparable. "In the development of human culture," he observed, "we cannot fix a point where myth ends or religion begins Myth is from its very beginning potential religion."⁵³ A central event in the civil religion for preservationists of Virginia and New England was the American Revolution. Becoming "a sacred tale of origins," the War for Independence, one student of civil religion concluded, was "in itself a religious experience, a hierophany collectively manifested and received, which provided the fundamental basis for American civil religion as we know it."⁵⁴ The civil religionists further drew upon the long-established idea of national destiny. Believing that America was the "redeemer nation" and destined to influence the world with her concepts of freedom and liberty, they considered Americans as the "chosen race, chosen nation" which possessed a "millennial-utopian destiny for mankind."⁵⁵

The civil religion of historic preservationists inculcated loyalty not only to the nation, but as importantly to the state and locality.

⁵³ Cassirer quoted in Osterweis, The Myth of the Lost Cause, p. 153.

⁵⁴ Catherine L. Albanese, Sons of the Fathers: The Civil Religion of the American Revolution (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), pp. 6, 8. Michael Kammen, likewise, considered the roots of civil religion deeply ingrained in the national character, probably developing with the early Protestant pioneers; see his People of Paradox, pp. 270-271.

⁵⁵ Ernest Lee Tuveson, Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. vii-viii. The notion of national destiny was not unique to the United States, Carlton Hayes explained; characteristic of other nations in the West, it was chiefly a product of modern nationalism; see his Nationalism: A Religion (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), p. 165.

Since Virginians and New Englanders had a strong sense of regionalism which captured their first allegiances, their Gospel of Preservation wove the concepts of nation, state, and individual into one fabric. This sense of regionalism was built upon an image of both past and future. Virginians in the APVA considered the Old Dominion a land of gifted presidents and rugged, freedom-loving colonists. The SPNEA, on the other hand, worked to protect the legacy of Puritan and Yankee which had been diminished by recent immigrants and political bosses. An image, after all, is a symbol and model for the future. These common symbols and models are absolutely essential for a shared identity; preservationists, rallying together to preserve their heritage, saw them as foundation stones for the future. According to David M. Potter, a historian of American nationalism, allegiance to nation, and for that matter to the state, "rests on two psychological bases rather than one--feeling of common culture on the one hand and feeling of common interests on the other. It is questionable," he cautioned, "whether either basis can support a superstructure of nationality without the other."⁵⁶ The concerns of historic preservationists were firstly the regional identity and only secondly the national image. Yet the changes in the national image--including the rise of the West and the heterogeneity of heritages--often shaped their efforts to preserve the local legend and character.

For historic preservationists loyalty to state and nation therefore became inextricably linked. "It is self-evident that national loyalty flourishes not by challenging and overpowering all other loyalties," David Potter reasoned, "but by subsuming them all in a mutually supportive

⁵⁶David M. Potter, "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," in History and American Society: Essays of David M. Potter, ed. by Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 84.

relation to one another. The strength of the whole is not enhanced by destroying the parts, but is made up of the sum of the parts."⁵⁷ Certain aspects of regional identity, however, are independent of national identity and may become counter-national. As in the South loyalty to the Lost Cause of the Confederacy held the hearts of many in the APVA. Though interpreted by Northerners as counter-national, these Virginians insisted that loyalty to the Stars and Bars was not disloyalty to the Stars and Stripes. Yet their allegiance was to a concept and philosophy which had been soundly defeated in the Civil War. Perhaps, they hoped, through more pacific means--image building--they could influence the nation.

Historic preservation, therefore, was an expression, sometimes excessive, of regional rivalry. Virginians and New Englanders commonly jabbed at one another in their orations and prose. These emphases upon their unique contributions and separate identities were typical for historic preservation movements which, Robin Winks claimed, "are bound to be negative with respect to someone else." Similarly, these state and local historical societies, according to David D. Van Tassel, were rivalrous and used history as "'weapons in the battle to dominate the writing of national history.'" Even the creation of national heroes, who were popularized partly through preserved shrines and houses, was "the by-product of regional rivalry and provincial patriotism."⁵⁸ The Gospel of Preservation, therefore, reflected this strong regional bias and interpretation; it became a tool to influence state and nation alike.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 75.

⁵⁸ Robin Winks, "Conservation in America," p. 142; quoted in Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 357, 363.

Precedents in Preservation

The Gospel of Preservation, as pronounced by the APVA and the SPNEA, bore continuity with earlier preservation work. Characteristically the preservation movement in the nineteenth century, according to Hosmer, had been a "truly grass-roots effort" which "sprang up spontaneously" and was undertaken as an "amateur activity." Preservationists were primarily concerned with buildings not for their architectural or aesthetic worth, but for their associational values or links to patriots, pioneers, and influential families. Since the work was conducted for educational and inspirational purposes, preservationists were "in the business of creating and perpetuating shrines" for their heroes.⁵⁹

Believing that it was woman's duty to provide moral lessons for modern lives, the APVA (1889) continued these trends when it organized the first state-wide preservation organization in the nation. The SPNEA (1910), on the other hand, became the first New England preservation group formed on a regional basis. Although viewing the past as an object lesson for the present, the New Englanders placed an increasing emphasis on the artistry, the aesthetics, and the architecture of their forebears. Yet these qualities were stressed within the ambit of the gospel; their preservation work became a strong commentary on the inferior, albeit modern, era.

American historic preservation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would be influenced partly by three contrasting European examples. The French attitude would be expressed by Viollet-le-

⁵⁹Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 21; Hosmer, "The Broadening View of the Historic Preservation Movement," p. 122. Antique collectors in the nineteenth century were similarly interested in the patriotic and romantic aspects; see Stillinger, The Antiquers, p. xii.

Duc, the nineteenth-century architect and restorer of sites such as Cité de Carcassonne. His restoration of a building created, in essence, a totally reoriented structure, whose "condition of completeness . . . could never have existed at any given time." The English philosophy, on the other hand, was antipodal to the French and best represented by the art critic John Ruskin. Believing that "restoration was a form of destruction," he advocated through his publications and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877) that buildings should be protected as found. The third pattern, the Swedish, was exemplified by Skansen, the outdoor museum which Dr. Arthur Hazelius assembled in Stockholm in 1891. Organized in parklike fashion, the museum was a living display of crafts and customs situated in old buildings which had been moved onto the site. Each of these three patterns would influence American preservationists as they implemented the Gospel of Preservation, although the SPNEA was more attuned to the European models than its Virginia counterpart.⁶⁰

The most important American precedent for the APVA and the SPNEA was the rescue of Mount Vernon and, as importantly, its cemetery as a memorial to George Washington. In the years immediately preceding the Civil War, Anne Pamela Cunningham formed the Mount Vernon Ladies Association (MVLA). A spinster who devoted her life to the cause, Cunningham appealed to the nation in 1853 to keep Mount Vernon from becoming "the seat of manufacturers and manufactories." Aiding her cause before the Virginia legislature in 1855, Governor Joseph Johnson praised the MVLA women for their "female philanthropy" and postulated that "dollars become

⁶⁰Hosmer, Presence of the Past, pp. 23-24.

as dust when compared with the inestimable patriotism inspired by a visit to the tomb."⁶¹

After organizing chapters in most states and winning endorsements from prominent leaders, the MLVA privately purchased the house and grave. In the later years of the century critics of the MVLA advocated that the women turn the site over to the federal government; others disagreed and feared that government ownership might bring Washington's home within the orbit of the spoils system. In 1918, for example, the SPNEA's William Sumner Appleton publicly asked: "'Is it not rather a certainty that under public control all the positions connected with the management would be made the spoils of party politics and we would be treated to the unsavory sight of politicians scrambling for the salary attached to the care of Washington's grave.'" During these years the MVLA precedent strongly influenced many patriotic women. Though the APVA was most impressed by the Mount Vernon ladies, the MVLA also reached into New England; even Appleton's cousin, Miss Alice Longfellow--daughter of the poet and trustee of the SPNEA--was an MVLA vice regent. The MVLA set a successful pattern for a private, female, and limited preservation effort. Since preservation was oriented toward the feminine spheres of the school and the home, women became most active in its work through the remaining years of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth centuries.⁶²

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 43, 44; see also George B. Forgie, Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979), Ch. 5.

⁶² Appleton cited in Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 56. Many historians have failed to examine the philosophy or message of these feminine preservationists. Calling them "atavistic old ladies" active in "cults of quill pen and corner cupboard," J. C. Furnas, among others, humorously dismiss them; see his The Americans: A Social History of the United States, 1587-1914 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), p. 604.

Although New England also had successful precedents in preservation, such as the protection of the Old North Church in Boston, the strongest influence on the SPNEA would be the demolition of the John Hancock house during the Civil War. Both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the city of Boston briefly toyed with the idea of its acquisition, but the plans were aborted and the house fell to the wreckers in 1863. Pieces of the woodwork were salvaged--William Sumner Appleton eventually inherited the staircase--and acted as painful reminders of public and governmental callousness toward traditional culture. "In 'dying,'" however, "the Hancock house contributed more to the preservation movement than it ever could have by remaining intact," Hosmer ironically noted. "Throughout the next five or six decades many preservationists used the Hancock Mansion as their rallying cry."⁶³ Appleton, for instance, placed a picture of the house on the cover of the SPNEA's first publication, and remembering the government's aborted plans, was ever wary of historic preservation through governmental offices.

The federal and state governments, nevertheless, did promote historical interest and a revived patriotism through their sponsorship of the centennial celebrations in 1876, 1881, and 1889. While the centennials set the stage for the formation of a flock of ancestral and patriotic societies, their influence on the acquisition and protection of buildings was slower in coming. The antique collecting movement, however, received an impetus as some Americans reacted against the contemporary wave of manufactured goods and the gimcrackery so apparent at the centennials. Believing that "beauty and taste were crucial in shaping character," the antiquers

⁶³Hosmer, Presence of the Past, pp. 38-39.

thought that the nation "was being degraded by the tasteless, graceless assembly-line products in their homes." At the same time antiques were primarily cherished as symbols of the WASP heritage. As they eyed the city's old streets and historic neighborhoods, traditionalists particularly resented, in the phrase of James K. Hosmer, a *fin de siècle* historian, "'the influx of alien tides'" who acted as if "'our precious heirlooms are as nothing.'"⁶⁴ Antiques, like historic buildings, were therefore cherished as symbols of Anglo-Saxon leadership, sound craftsmanship, and a virile and pure people.

The centennials had a further influence on American architectural tastes. Shortly after the 1876 celebration, new domestic construction appeared as the Colonial Revival style. Although these newer dwellings imitated certain superficial features of the older structures, purists claimed that the imitations were poor reflections of the building's design harmonies, their superior construction and craftsmanship, and the simpler and nobler lives of their forebears. They argued, therefore, that the authentic image and artifact must be preserved and respected. As a result of the centennial's inspiration, the patriotic impulse in preservation also quickened. Washington's headquarters at Valley Forge was preserved and enshrined in 1879. Two years later the centennial of Cornwallis's surrender brought attention to the Moore house in Yorktown. Patriotic associations, again, were the strongest motivation to preserve an old structure.

In the decade before the organization of the APVA, therefore, historic preservation was generally a patriotic and educational undertaking.

⁶⁴Stillinger, The Antiquers, p. 45; James K. Hosmer quoted in Edward N. Saveth, American Historians and European Immigrants, 1875-1925 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), p. 24.

Since it was a reflection of the mother's task of building character and morality, it also had a feminine emphasis. Men would become active as preservationists when they encouraged women to undertake their duty and publicly promoted their efforts. Architects, however, would only enter the movement seriously in the next century. The APVA, then, inherited a preservationist legacy which was largely restricted in scope, narrow in focus, and selective in its undertakings. Their Gospel of Preservation would reflect Virginia's fear that its older traditions, heritage, and order were in jeopardy. Preservation, in the hands of the APVA, therefore, became both a defense to protect the past and an offense to shape the future. History held the key to unlock the future; the question was, however, who would mold and control the key.

CHAPTER II
THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA
ANTIQUITIES AND THE RESTORATION
OF THE OLD DOMINION

Traditionalist Virginians preached the Gospel of Preservation in the last years of the nineteenth century as they fervently attempted to restore the honor, order, and purpose of the Old Dominion. Believing that the Virginia of John Smith, Patrick Henry, and Robert E. Lee was more noble and pure than their own, traditionalists used sites, buildings, shrines, and memorials to evoke the memories and ideals of those earlier eras. Through knowledge of and allegiance to that past, preservationists hoped that modern-day Virginians would draw the courage and ability to reorder the recent tumult instigated by Yankee invaders, Reconstructionists, Readjusters, and integrationists. This chapter will concentrate primarily on the background of the preservationists and the buildings and sites which they chose to preserve. The following chapter will examine both the memorials which they constructed and the view of history which they voiced and printed. For the primary contribution of the APVA was its message--documented through memorials, sites and buildings--that a harmonious and ordered society could be achieved only through an emulation of the ancients.

As an integral part of the traditionalist renaissance which blossomed in the 1890s, historic preservationists joined the progressives

and urged Virginians--the select, the professional, and the elite--to step forward, do their duty, and thereby preserve the past and protect the present. Yet historic preservation was largely a feminine concern. The past contained a vault of ideals and values which women used not simply to build their children's character, but to reform society as well. They pictured Old Virginia, symbolized by its historic buildings and sites, as a land of dutiful leaders, obedient citizens, and loyal workers. If modern Virginia wanted that type of leadership, order, and harmony, preservationists argued, then it must learn from its preserved past.

While the APVA on paper appeared to be a women's society, some of Virginia's most prominent men--often husbands, fathers, or brothers of the female preservationists--sat on the influential Advisory Board. Since women were prevented by the constraints of Victorian and traditionalist society from public action outside of their domestic sphere, their opinions concerning many contemporary issues, such as political corruption or lower-class activism, were often muted or veiled. Consequently, the male advisors played the important role of identifying the problems of society, defining their solutions, and charting the parameters of operation. Preservationists, male and female alike, worked to assure that traditionalist culture was preserved, established families and leaders were respected, and racial order was restored. Most importantly, they hoped that future generations of Virginians would rely upon the lamp of the past, partly in the domain of the APVA, to light their present ways. The Gospel of Preservation portended security and stability for traditionalists in an era fraught with ominous change.

Radical Challenges to Old Virginia

The roots of the APVA were firmly embedded in the legacy of Civil War, Reconstruction, and Readjusterism. The philosophical temper of the organization and its first generation of leadership were perhaps best represented by J. L. M. Curry, Thomas Nelson Page, Joseph Bryan, William Wirt Henry, Belle Stewart Bryan, Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman, Mary Jeffrey Galt, and Mary Mann Page Stanard (nee Newton). Since the APVA's Gospel of Preservation mirrored their perspectives, the meaning of historic preservation during these tumultuous years was inseparable from the mind and manner of its interpreters.

The experiences of war and reconstruction were indelibly stamped upon their psyches. While defeat and poverty were acknowledged, Mary Stanard, the Association's historian, claimed it was "defeat without dishonor" and "poverty without shame." During Reconstruction, according to Thomas Nelson Page who was prominent on the Advisory Board and a frequent mouthpiece for the organization, the North "dismembered, disfranchised, denationalized" and otherwise humiliated the South.¹

The most unsettling changes of all were Negro emancipation, the Fifteenth Amendment to the federal Constitution, and the Underwood Constitution which Virginia adopted in 1869. Joseph Bryan, Advisory Board member and Richmond's most prominent citizen from the 1880s until his death in 1907, called black enfranchisement "the greatest curse that

¹Mary Newton Stanard, Richmond: Its People and Its Story (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1923), p. 211; Thomas Nelson Page, "The Old South," in The Old South: Essays Social and Political (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p. 4. Like other Virginians Page created a myth of Reconstruction as the South's own "bloody shirt." Actually Virginia had been "redeemed" and returned to conservative rule in 1869; see Jack P. Maddex, Jr., The Virginia Conservatives, 1867-1879: A Study in Reconstruction Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970).

ever befall this country." J. L. M. Curry, also of the Advisory Board, contended that it was a gross deviation "from the recorded opinions of the Fathers." Condemning the postwar change, he warned that "several millions of negroes . . . having behind them centuries of ignorance, thriftlessness, superstition, and despotism, cannot be dragged up to civilization and democratic institutions by legislative enactments and the enthusiasm of fanatics." Curry pictured the Reconstruction governments as "the dregs of Rome, hungry as hounds, merciless as wolves, [who] came to gorge and plunder."² The venomous oratory and bombast of Curry, Page, and Bryan with which they characterized the postwar years, although patently partisan and refuted by later historians, actually set the stage for the traditionalist renaissance.

The Underwood Constitution became the bogey of traditionalists as they claimed that it led to a period of Africanization. In fact, according to Raymond Pulley, the constitution was "the most democratic instrument of government the Old Dominion has ever known" and the conservatives feared the dramatic challenges which it presented to their hierarchical and social order. "The prospect of popular control of the state and the threat it would pose to the sacred traditions of the Old Dominion was a spectre that haunted the old-time Virginian for many years after Reconstruction." Therefore the preservationists of Old Virginia used the myth of Reconstruction and the romantic image of the harmonious Old South "as a propaganda device in initiating a movement to wipe out the work of

²Joseph Bryan to Edward W. James, May 31, 1898, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; J. L. M. Curry, "Causes of the Power and Prosperity of the United States," oration, June 27, 1889, pp. 26-27, Curry Papers II-10, LC; Curry, "The New South," in The Christian Union, February 8, 1885, p. 7, Curry Papers I-14, LC.

Reconstruction and restore the Old Virginia system of controls and order."³

After a brief interlude of conservative rule in the 1870s, Virginia was again rocked by efforts to radically reconstruct its society. The Readjusters, led by General William O. Mahone, united poor blacks and whites in a political coalition which triumphed in 1879. With his pledge to reform the state leadership and readjust its debt, Mahone's challenge sent shivers down the spine of Curry and other conservatives. Warning President Hayes whose party had aligned with the Readjusters, Curry predicted that the election and its "demagoguism[and] communism" would bring "incalculable mischief," especially "for the youth, just forming habits of life."⁴

What these conservatives most feared were popular control and lower-class government, fears which would implicitly shape the APVA's Gospel of Preservation. The debt readjustment schemes of Mahone were denounced by "many members of the old, established families" and the wealthy in the cities. According to these conservatives, any readjustment of the debt, even when used by the Readjusters to improve schools and social services, would be an offense against Virginia's honor and integrity. The Anti-Readjusters, or Funders, were led by some of the most prominent men--and soon to be APVA advisors--in the state, including Page, Henry, Bryan, Curry,

³Raymond H. Pulley, Old Virginia Restored: An Interpretation of the Progressive Impulse, 1870-1930 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968), pp. 6, 9, 10; see also Carl N. Degler, The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), p. 270.

⁴Curry quoted in Jessie Pearl Rice, J. L. M. Curry: Southerner, Statesman, and Educator (New York: King's Crown Press, 1949), p. 83; see also Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, p. 38 and Degler, The Other South, p. 279.

and Rev. Moses D. Hoge.⁵

Conservatives pulled out all their cards to defeat the class-conscious radicals. Curry accused them of a "saturnalia of misgovernment and ignorance." State Senator Henry evoked the spirit of his grandfather Patrick Henry to "resist the heel of tyranny."⁶ In the election campaigns, however, the conservatives failed to practice the noble purity which they attributed to their ancestors; in Richmond they "brought corruption to city government" and in the state they bore equal blame for "the shameful lack of political morality." As conservatives resorted to ballot-box stuffing and voter intimidation, some traditionalists, including Bryan, Curry, and Henry, realized the hypocrisy and advocated "a general housecleaning to restore the traditional respectability of the state."⁷ The traditionalist renaissance, of which the APVA was one part, underlay these reforms and coincided with Virginia's progressive movements.

The traditionalist renaissance began with the 1883 election which returned the General Assembly to the conservative fold. Williamsburg's Cynthia Coleman, later organizer of the APVA, wrote that had the Readjusters won "we could not have lived in this part of Virginia, and decent people would have found it hard to live anywhere in the State." Fitzhugh

⁵Virinius Dabney, Virginia: The New Dominion (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1971), pp. 377-378. For the most comprehensive coverage see Charles C. Pearson, The Readjuster Movement in Virginia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935).

⁶J. L. M. Curry, A Brief Sketch of George Peabody, and a History of the Peabody Education Fund Through Thirty Years (Cambridge: University Press, 1898), p. 45; William Wirt Henry, "Speech of William Wirt Henry," The State, December 20, 1879, Henry Papers, VHS.

⁷For Richmond see Michael B. Chesson, Richmond After the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981), p. 189; for Virginia see Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, pp. 41, 50.

Lee, nephew of the great Confederate commander, was elected governor two years later and hallelujahs rang out from conservative circles which proclaimed that a new era had begun. Yet insurgents remained strong enough to pose challenges, such as in 1886 when the Knights of Labor won the Richmond city elections. The Knights then became the target of the conservative press which denounced them as radicals unrepresentative of honest Virginia laborers. As a result of the conservative resurgence William Mahone was soundly defeated in the elections of 1889 and led Joseph Bryan to editorialize in his Times that 1889 was "the most memorable year in the history of the State after the year that saw the passage of the ordinance of secession."⁸ Although Mahone was defeated, his radical spirit lived; the conservative social reform movement, including the APVA, arose to confront that specter.

Throughout the 1880s black Virginians exercised significant freedoms in politics and society as a result of the Readjusters--albeit a party less than egalitarian--and their notions of liberty. Traditionalists lived in dread of that fact. Cynthia Coleman watched these tendencies, including what she perceived as black disrespect for tradition and property rights, and deplored "the way in which the miserable negroes behave now about everything we hold sacred, or attach any sentiment to." Her cousin, Joseph Bryan, likewise admitted "a horror of the patent consequences of stirring up the black mass." Mindful of the white-black alliance represented by the Readjusters, Curry warned that miscegenation would result and "'an inert, degraded population'" would appear. White womanhood

⁸Cynthia Coleman to George [P. Coleman], November 13, 1883, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 57, CWM; [Joseph Bryan], "Thanksgiving Day," The Richmond Daily Times, November 28, 1889.

was jeopardized, Page concluded, by uncontrolled black masses. While usually deploring the mob riots and lynchings which were instigated to intimidate the blacks, the genteel traditionalists urged the leaders of the Old Dominion to return to the orderly ways of the harmonious past. When the North abandoned its drive for black rights in the South by 1890, Southerners quickly legislated and enacted measures to assure that order.⁹

Although the Readjusters had been defeated, the grass-roots democracy which they represented surfaced again with populism in the 1890s. Unlike the radicalism of the 1880s, however, the Populists in Virginia were led by agrarian aristocrats, principally Colonel Robert Beverley and Major Mann Page. Despite this impressive leadership, traditionalists, represented again by Bryan, Curry, and Archer Anderson, denounced the movement which, they predicted, would lead to Negro rule and mobocracy. Bryan regretted greatly that an FFV would lead what he perceived to be a class-conscious mob, and warned Beverley that the populist theories were "Socialistic & centralizing." Especially dangerous was their disregard for property rights--in particular the proposals for government ownership of the rails and telegraph--which Bryan considered "rank tyranny." Likewise, Archer Anderson, chief executive of Tredegar Iron Works and an APVA advisor, called the populism of William Jennings Bryan a "dangerous and

⁹ Cynthia Coleman to George [P. Coleman], February 26, 1884, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 57, CWM; Joseph Bryan to Holmes Conrad [M.C.], June 11, 1898, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Curry quoted in Rice, J. L. M. Curry, p. 157; Page quoted in Laurence J. Friedman, The White Savage: Racial Fantasies in the Postbellum South (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, A Spectrum Book, 1970), pp. 67-68. The new racial order is best treated in Howard N. Rabinowitz, Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 339.

revolutionary experiment."¹⁰

Joseph Bryan, perhaps more than any other Virginian, led the attack on Bryanism in the Democratic party. Through his Richmond Times, and indirectly through the educational mission of the APVA, he promised to use "'bell, book and candle to exorcise this flaming spirit of revolution'" which W. J. Bryan (no family relation) brought to the Democratic party. Together with W. W. Henry and other traditionalists, he helped form a Gold Democratic party in 1896. Yet, he ironically acknowledged that the Populists had a valid point in their attacks on the northern plutocracy. Although the plutocrats were a principal base for the goldbugs, Bryan nonetheless denounced their "worship of money." "That thing they call commercialism is really the basis of the attacks of the populists upon plutocrats. That is unquestionably a class of people that think that money is everything and has special rights."¹¹ Rather than join the Populists, Bryan, like the APVA, appealed to the propertied classes to reform their ways. The Gospel of Preservation for Bryan translated into conservative and elite leaders, not callous and indifferent plutocrats, exercising a responsible and paternalistic hand in society.

The traditionalist renaissance was a complex phenomenon as some Virginians evoked past memories to escape the troubling present, while

¹⁰ Joseph Bryan to Colonel Robert Beverley, March 28, 1894 and June 6, 1894, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Archer Anderson to W. L. Wilson [M.C.], October 31, 1896, Anderson Letterbook, VSL. Virginia's populism is best treated in William DuBose Sheldon, Populism in the Old Dominion: Virginia Farm Politics, 1885-1900 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935). Sheldon considered Bryan's Richmond Times firmly aligned with the "commercial interests," and "bitterly anti-silver," p. 135.

¹¹ Joseph Bryan quoted in John Stewart Bryan, Joseph Bryan: His Times, His Family, His Friends (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1935), p. 259; Joseph Bryan to William F. Gordon, Jr., June 5, 1903, Bryan Letterbook, VHS.

many more used it to justify the reactionary attack against the democratic freedoms associated with postwar radicalism. As an organization the APVA took no official position, but its leading spokesmen, including Bryan, Page, Curry, and Philip Alexander Bruce, visibly led the genteel wing of the attack against economic and political democracy. According to Raymond Pulley, the foremost historian of this traditionalist renaissance, Page and his brother-in-law Bruce were "most prominent" in the genteel movement and were characteristic of "a group of writers who glorified the plantation legend of the Old South and 'spoke in vindication of the society, ideals, and values of the ancient regime.'" ¹²

Historic preservationists preserved sites, shrines, and symbols of this older society; they fashioned part of what Pulley called the "Old Virginia Mystique." Wielded as a powerful weapon, the mystique was first used to defeat the Readjusters, then to control the Underwood electorate, and finally to constrict the franchise and assure the domination of the Democratic party and its select leadership. Therefore the shapers of the mystique, inspired by the colonial and antebellum past, "struggled to resurrect and rebuild the Old Virginia system of controls over society and politics," and thereby turn back the clock on recent change. ¹³

Progressivism and the Politics of History

Historic preservation shared many ideals and aspirations with progressivism in the Old Dominion. The APVA's Gospel of Preservation voiced the need to return to traditional styles of leadership and values. Progressivism in the South, claimed J. Morgan Kousser, likewise sought "the

¹²Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, pp. 58-59.

¹³Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, p. viii.

stabilization of society . . . in the interests of local established powers, [but] at the expense of the lower strata of society." As with historic preservationists, progressives "shared a yearning for a more orderly and cohesive community" which, according to Dewey Grantham, they felt "was a prerequisite for economic development and material progress." In the quest for this community, politics would be reformed, social controls applied, and society purified in order that men may be protected from their own weaknesses. This notion of progressivism and its community, George Brown Tindall added, was "almost the inevitable corollary of Bourbonism in its most patrician and 'responsible' moods." Bourbonism and its "vision of an organic traditional community with its personal relationships, its class distinctions, [and] its habits of deference to the squirearchy," became the precedent for progressives as they countered the democratic changes associated with recent radicalism.¹⁴ The ideals of historic preservation easily dovetailed with these Bourbon notions inherent in Virginia progressivism as both sought a return to the ideal community representative, they thought, of the colonial and antebellum South.

While the progressive impulse was "synonymous" with the Old Virginia Mystique, it, like historic preservation, was class- and culture-bound to its proponents. Those Virginians who led the traditionalist renaissance, Pulley noted, "were primarily interested in preserving the values of the upper and middle strata of the state, which had been gripped by a feeling

¹⁴ J. Morgan Kousser, The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 230; Dewey W. Grantham, "The Contours of Southern Progressivism," The American Historical Review 86 (December 1981):1044; George Brown Tindall, "Progressives," in The Persistent Tradition in New South Politics (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), p. 61; Tindall, "Bourbons," in *ibid.*, p. 22.

of anxiety and crisis during the uncertain 1870's and 1890's." The central political values of the APVA's Gospel of Preservation were honesty and responsibility by the leaders of government. Yet many Virginians realized that the pervasive corruption of their own day stood as a stark contrast. "I feel as if our civilization was at stake," Joseph Bryan wrote, "--ordinary political questions are insignificant compared with elections full of fraud, perjury & bribery." For Virginia progressives, honest elections necessitated not simply a regeneration of the old traditions, but a constriction of the electorate as well. "'I had rather see the Democrats take shotguns and drive the Negroes from the polls," Bryan warned, "than to see our young men taught to cheat. If they once learn that lesson they will not stop at cheating Negroes.'" ¹⁵

The culmination of the campaign for honest elections came with the new Virginia Constitution of 1902 which disfranchised most of the Underwood electorate. Progressives argued that a constriction was needed to save the morality of the state and prevent Negro domination. Philip Alexander Bruce, for example, argued that the new law "will eliminate with equal effectiveness the least intelligent and the least conservative elements among the white and black voters alike. This will be of extraordinary advantage to the general moral health and prosperity" of the Old Dominion. The advocates of voter restriction were strongest in the Tidewater and eastern sections of the state, areas which also had a sizable black population. The Shenandoah and the west, on the other hand, were

¹⁵ Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, p. 155; Joseph Bryan to Colonel Robert Beverley, January 1, 1894, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Joseph Bryan quoted in John Stewart Bryan, Joseph Bryan, p. 250. Bryan's sentiments were common among southern progressives; see Kousser, Shaping of Southern Politics, p. 257.

less enthusiastic and often critical of the constitution. In most of the southern disfranchisement conventions, Kousser claimed, "not only did the vast majority of the leaders reside in the black belt, almost all of them were affluent and well-educated, and they often bore striking resemblances to antebellum 'patricians.'" What makes this geographical analysis most striking, however, was its parallel to the appeal of the APVA. Historic preservation was strongest and most popular in the Tidewater and east and very weak in the west. Like the Gospel of Preservation, the Constitution of 1902, therefore, symbolized the reform of the Old Dominion through traditionalist and historic ways. It was, Pulley concluded, "closely identified with the historic drives so characteristic of and peculiar to Old Virginia--elite rule, rigid administration, and honesty and integrity in public service."¹⁶ Political peace, absent for the last thirty-five years, returned to Virginia.

Although the drive to constrict the suffrage had brought traditionalists together, the coalition soon splintered over the other issues of the day. The debate over prohibition, woman's suffrage, and machine government would spark differences within the ranks of the APVA. It appears that the preservationists had aligned only against lower-class insurgents, but issues such as temperance and votes for women, which represented in good part middle-class reform, created dissension among the ranks of the propertied classes. Traditionalist politicians would nonetheless use the Old Virginia Mystique as a badge of respectability

¹⁶ Philip Alexander Bruce, *The Rise of the New South*, Volume 17 in *The History of North America*, ed. Guy Carleton Lee (Philadelphia: G. Barrie, 1905), p. 471; actually this Negro threat was a bogey to disguise their real intent to eliminate the democratic franchise of 1869, see Pulley, *Old Virginia Restored*, p. 77; Kousser, *Shaping of Southern Politics*, p. 247; Pulley, p. 93.

and fealty to the ancients. As Virginia politics reverted to "an oligarchic office-holding coterie reminiscent of the courthouse cliques of antebellum times," the Democratic establishment identified itself with the romantic history of the Old Dominion, including the Lost Cause and historic preservation, and a small portion of the state's electorate.¹⁷

Conservative Protestantism and its clergy were active at the same time in shaping the values and aspirations of Virginians. Not only did the APVA have leading ministers on its Advisory Board, including Moses D. Hoge, William Meade Clark, and Alfred M. Randolph, its preservation efforts were often directed at the protection of colonial churches as well. When it came to the progressive notions of social uplift and justice, the pronouncements of the Protestant churches "mirrored the Progressive movement in tenor and phraseology." Like the APVA's own Gospel of Preservation, however, "little beyond the gospel of personal redemption was proclaimed from community pulpits."¹⁸ Some ministers with APVA affiliations--most notably W. A. R. Goodwin--echoed tenets of the social gospel and called for determined efforts to restore the peace and harmony associated with early Virginia.

The progressive and preservationist coalitions also included professionals, businessmen, and agents for social uplift programs. Southern progressivism, according to Dewey Grantham, was "interest-group politics" whereby each interest, including historic preservation, competed for the public eye with its plans for community improvement. Premised upon the

¹⁷ Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, pp. 111, 155.

¹⁸ Kenneth K. Bailey, Southern White Protestantism in the Twentieth Century (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), pp. 42-43; see also W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), pp. 135, 138.

philosophy of environmentalism, progressives argued that the individual and society alike could be helped through social engineering and control. The APVA's gospel, for example, posited that the reformation of society depended upon the citizen's allegiance--gained through persuasion, education, or legislation--to older values and principles. These notions were fairly common for the day, Sheldon Hackney explained, for they were "'interrelated facets of a single, economically self-interested, ethically shaped, middle-class attitude toward life.'"¹⁹

Intrinsic to these calls for social uplift and control was the paternalism of the Old Virginia Mystique. Just as the elite--which had expanded to include the select and successful in business and the professions--controlled politics, so too did they influence education, charity, historical studies, and other means to control society. Countering the trend of privatism, APVA leaders repeatedly urged their members to steer this reformation of the Old Dominion through the Gospel of Preservation. As president Belle Bryan phrased it, "In these days of sordid aggrandisement and selfish pleasures, we need to keep steadily in view the pure and lofty ideals of duty and service."²⁰

Their noblesse oblige involved more than work with the APVA. Belle Bryan, for example, founded a kindergarten and worked for the YWCA; her husband Joseph served on commissions to uplift the Negro, reform the penitentiary, and improve education. Samuel Chiles Mitchell, professor of history at Richmond College, was the paramount progressive and active in

¹⁹Dewey Grantham, "The Contours of Southern Progressivism," p. 1040; Sheldon Hackney quoted in *ibid.*, p. 1045.

²⁰"Report of the President for 1903," Year Book of the APVA, 1901-1904, p. 7; hereafter referred to as YB.

the gamut of causes. These activities sprang from the notion of duty and community responsibility built into the Old Virginia Mystique. "Not one of us, old or young, is living in the past," APVA president Lora Ellyson noted; "our sympathies are with the poor and the suffering; . . . but I would instill into the minds of the present generation a love of the past and a desire to work for the ideals and objects of the association."

While the APVA stressed the responsibility of the individual--whether poor or wealthy--to the community, they gainsaid the real need for governmental efforts to abate the ravages of industrial capitalism. These notions of the APVA were typical for progressives who "relied mainly on communication, moral suasion, and intimate local communities to bring about a sense of national community" and its embodiment in institutions.²¹ Like the preservationist's concentration on the individual, the progressive's position did not come to grips with the need for basic structural change.

In tandem with the progressive's plan for social uplift was the determination to impose social controls in order to stem the perceived chaos. Although this solution was quite common in the era, social control "was seldom well defined and hardly conspiratorial," Jack T. Kirby explained; it "merely expressed the rather smug belief among professionals . . . that their expertise could bring about better conditions and a rational new 'order.'" For Southerners the need for controls was particularly felt as many thought that "they stood at the crossroads of history; their sense of historical data was well founded: Confederate veterans,

²¹"Holds Meeting in Marshall House," The Richmond Times-Dispatch, January 5, 1913, in Minute Book of the APVA, 1908-1914, VHS; hereafter referred to as MB/APVA; Jean B. Quandt, From the Small Town to the Great Community: The Social Thought of Progressive Intellectuals (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), pp. 1-2.

Bourbon gentlemen, and 'old time darkies' were fast dying off, along with other references to the old regime."²² Preservationists often voiced the need for social cohesion through education, professional administration, and other controls. Many of them lived in Richmond--a bustling city and APVA headquarters--and experienced firsthand the dimensions of urban change. "The city sorted out people along economic and social lines, facilitated the formation of functional organizations, and fostered a heightened concern for social order, stability, and efficiency."²³ Most important for the tenor of the APVA's Gospel of Preservation was the fact that the prominent spokesmen and shapers of the organization, including Page, Bryan, and Henry, were first-generation transplants from the plantation and countryside to the city. The APVA allowed many of them to form a community of like minds; their criticisms and lamentations were partly a reflection of their changed identity and social mobility.

The educational revival of the Progressive period combined elements of social control and uplift in the Old Dominion. The Gospel of Preservation reflected this with its premise that the past was one control on the future. J. L. M. Curry, the most prominent educational reformer in the South, repeatedly warned that peace and prosperity were dependent upon a citizenship which was "restrained and disciplined and elevated by intelligence and morality." Likewise Samuel C. Mitchell, who sat on the APVA Advisory Board with Curry, called the school "the exponent of Americanism." Lila Meade Valentine and Mary Cooke Branch Munford, aristocratic belles and

²²Jack Temple Kirby, Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972), p. 58.

²³Grantham, "Contours of Southern Progressivism," p. 1037.

APVA members, were similarly active in state and local education efforts.²⁴

Education became a means to implement the Gospel of Preservation and to return to the honest, industrious, and intelligent citizenship of the past.

Historic preservation was thereby influenced by the conservatism of traditionalists Virginia and its brand of progressivism. The Gospel of Preservation, as voiced by APVA leaders, called upon the leaders of society to exercise their duty, take command, and bring order to the Old Dominion. Defined by the elite, these solutions would be a combination of individualistic uplift and social control. The democracy of the Reconstruction and Readjuster periods was replaced by the order and stability of the Progressive era. The Gospel of Preservation became a philosophical buttress and an implied rationale for progressives as they erased the imprint of recent radical and racial challenges.

The Growth of the APVA

Historic preservation was one facet of the traditionalist renaissance of the late 1880s. Predating both the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), the APVA was founded and promoted by Mary Jeffrey Galt of Norfolk in 1888 and officially organized in January of the following year by Cynthia Beverley Tucker

²⁴J. L. M. Curry, A Brief Sketch of George Peabody . . ., p. 82; Samuel C. Mitchell, "The South And The School," 1906, Mitchell Papers, Box 9, LC. The continuity of minds and generations in the Advisory Board was aptly represented by these two noted reformers. A year before Curry's death Mitchell wrote him: "You have entered very largely into my life as an ideal I have been enabled to breathe your spirit through the many forms of activity that you exert, writing, speaking, and projecting ideals both educational and civic. For all the strength that you impart to us younger men I am profoundly grateful. You help us more than you know"; Mitchell to Curry, November 4, 1902, Curry Papers I-14, LC.

Coleman of Williamsburg.²⁵ According to Galt, she was prompted to form "'an association something like the Mt. Vernon Association'" when she heard that "Powhatan's Chimney," thought then to have been built by John Smith's men for the Chief, collapsed during a storm in 1888. After conferring with Barton Myers, Norfolk mayor and later member of the Advisory Board, she chose the name Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and traveled to Richmond and New York City to solicit support. She invited Coleman to join her association and expressed fears that other colonial monuments were being vandalized by "the colored people."²⁶

In New York Galt received strong encouragement from Mrs. Roger A. Pryor and Mrs. Burton Harrison, two southern expatriates who championed the Lost Cause in the Yankee lair. Sara Pryor, credited as an incorporator of the APVA, urged her to "'make it a national association,'" and generally hoped that southern ways would influence the reunited nation.²⁷ Cynthia Coleman, meanwhile, determined to exert her own leadership by organizing a Virginia preservation movement. For at least five years she had been active locally through a children's society to preserve Bruton Parish churchyard and improve the church interior. Although she had expressed

²⁵ Since both took credit for establishing the organization, internecine disputes were fairly constant from 1889 until 1923 when a Richmond law firm investigated the extant documentation--partisan and sketchy as it was--and concluded with this version. To this date some controversy exists over the apportionment of honors between Galt and Coleman. Galt's papers are most revealing of this discord; see Galt Papers III, CWM; see also Powhatan's Chimney Research File, APVA.

²⁶ Mrs. J. Enders Robinson, "Origins of the A.P.V.A.," YB, 1900-1901, p. 4; for Coleman's invitation see, Mary J. Galt to Robert Alonzo Brock, January 14, 1889, Galt Papers III, CWM; for vandalism see Galt to Coleman, October 26, 1888, Powhatan's Chimney Research, APVA.

²⁷ Mary J. Galt to Mrs. [George] Bagby, April 17, 1895, Bagby Papers 78, VHS.

some earlier interest in forming a "Woman's Historical Association," upon hearing of Galt's plans she probably was pulled in that direction.²⁸

The first official meeting of the APVA was held in Williamsburg on January 4, 1889 and attended by Coleman, Galt, Ellen Lee who was wife of the Governor and first APVA president, and the faculty of the College of William and Mary. Lyon G. Tyler, son of President John Tyler and president of the College, explained the purposes, goals and objectives of the Association. In March the first Richmond meeting was held at the Governor's Mansion, as would most other meetings during Ellen Lee's tenure; the site of the meetings was a good indication of the prominence and semi-official position of historic preservation in the traditionalist renaissance. William Wirt Henry assisted the officers--all female--in laying the groundwork, electing a Gentlemen's Advisory Board, and choosing the vice presidents. The Advisory Board members, holding an honored position which could not "be bought in any way," according to Belle Bryan, included some of the most prominent clergy, businessmen, lawyers, artists, professionals, and antiquarians in Virginia.²⁹ The vice presidents similarly were chosen more for their social prominence, propriety, and reputation than for a proven interest in preservation.

²⁸ Later Coleman supporters would claim that the children's society was the actual beginning of the APVA. These claims are contrived and reflect more of Williamsburg's own pride than a balanced judgment; see, for example, Jeanette S. Kelly, "The First Restoration in Williamsburg," 1933, in Colonial Capital Branch Papers of the APVA (hereafter CCB/APVA), Box 1, CWM. See also Committee Reports, March 4, 1924 in President's Report of Meetings (hereafter PRM), 1923-1924, APVA.

²⁹ Belle Bryan to Parke Bagby, n.d., Bagby Papers 59, VHS. The Advisory Board membership probably reflected a small and select community of genteel Virginia leaders. Many were partners in business, related by blood or marriage, residential neighbors, Virginia Historical Society officers, and spouses of APVA officers. See Appendix I for a partial listing.

Membership in the Association, though ostensibly quite open, was limited by a number of devices to a select number. At first the APVA was a joint-stock company, whereby the stockholders held personal ownership of the past.³⁰ While ancestral lines were not required, membership was limited to those "in good standing in the community" and upon the invitation of a fellow member; Readjusters, Negroes, and radicals need not apply. As Mary Meares Galt acknowledged, "social lines were very closely drawn" in these communities, and thereby acted as an informal block against undesirable elements. Her cousin, Mary Jeffrey Galt, suggested that the branch directors should be "selected with such discrimination that they will . . . keep out or control any objectionable element that is likely to harm [the] Association." All in all, the ranks of the Association were open to the established, the "responsible," and those who allied themselves with that group.³¹

Belle Bryan succeeded Lee as the organization's president in 1890 and held the post, albeit sometimes inactively due to illness, until her death in 1910. Also one of the leading ladies of the Lost Cause, Bryan served as first president of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, which preserved the White House of the Confederacy, and spearheaded various commemorative causes. Her son, John S. Bryan who was publisher of the

³⁰ In 1892 the APVA constitution was revised; joint-stock provisions were dropped so that their property could be held tax-free.

³¹ Constitution and By-Laws of the APVA (Richmond, 1889), p. 18, in MB/APVA, 1889-1891, VHS; Mary M. Galt, untitled recollections, n.d., Galt Papers III, CWM; Mary J. Galt to Mrs. Bagby, April 16, 1895 (draft), Galt Papers III, CWM. Wilbur Cash described those who glorified the Old Virginia heritage "as a sort of closed corporation to which those who had not belonged before could not ever fully penetrate now"; The Mind of the South, p. 129. In the case of the APVA, his interpretation falls considerably short of the evidence. While the APVA did represent the FFVs, it also was open to the wealthy and propertied who swore fealty to the ancients.

Richmond News-Leader and member of the Gentlemen's Advisory Board, attributed her preservationist efforts to her religion, her loyalty to the Confederacy, and "the influence of the supreme figure of the war, General Lee, himself, with whom the daughters of Mr. John Stewart were thrown in constant association."³² For Belle Bryan, as for many others in the APVA, loyalty to Virginia meant fealty to the traditions established from colonial through Confederate times.

With Belle Bryan as president the APVA made its first real bid for community support in January 1890 at a Richmond public meeting. J. L. M. Curry presided and the rostrum was shared by Thomas Nelson Page, William Wirt Henry, Joseph Bryan, and other leading Virginians; the audience included many of Richmond's elite leaders and society. Page set the meeting's tone when he recounted the sweet (or saccharine to later readers) flavor of the old civilization and the urgent need for Virginians to reverse the present neglect, document their past, and preserve the extant symbols of the old order. With his resonating voice he commanded:

Go to Jamestown, the sacredest spot on this continent, with its crumbling or long crumbled wall, its very ground perishing under the advancing tides of our great river; go to Williamsburg, still redolent of the perfumes wafted from the most romantic society which ever existed in this hemisphere, where the echoes have hardly died away of the daring words which called a nation into being; go to Yorktown, where tyranny was smitten down; go to the old graveyards through the length and breadth of this Commonwealth, where sleep in unmarked graves a race the like of which we shall never see again. What will you find? Desolation and ruin; cow-pastures and sheep walks.³³

Page castigated Virginians for allowing the North to write national and southern history from its biased perspective, thereby controlling the image

³²John Stewart Bryan, Joseph Bryan, p. 292.

³³Page quoted in "Talk About Old Things," The Richmond Daily Times, January 19, 1890.

which Virginians held of themselves. Claiming that the North was active in historic preservation--a fact not wholly accurate, yet able to arouse the South to act--Page rejoiced that Virginia women had undertaken the holy task of preservation.

Joseph Bryan seconded Page's remarks and regretted that the great deeds of the past had become a "'shadowy tradition.'" Evoking the rationale for the APVA's Gospel of Preservation, he lectured that "'the birth-place of a parent is approached with a sense of reverence and awe. The long-vacated home of some great man is regarded as partaking of his spirit, and is often--but not too often--carefully preserved, that the virtues of its illustrious master may be the more forcibly perpetuated and impressed on the visitor.'" Comparing the ruins of Jamestown to the "'broken walls of Jerusalem,'" he asked the audience to "'Join us in rebuilding your sacred places'" and lend a hand "'in this holy work.'"³⁴

The preservation of the past had become particularly important for this generation of Virginians--Bryan, Page, Curry and others--in order to prop up the present. "Perhaps more than any other Americans," Pulley explained, Virginians "have derived their philosophy of life from customs and principles of conduct established many generations ago." Yet the humiliation faced since 1865 prompted them to refurbish and sanctify her past glories and successes. This feeling was particularly acute when considering the pride or, to be more exact, state chauvinism, with which Virginians hold the Old Dominion. As Edward V. Valentine, famed sculptor of the Lost Cause and member of the Gentlemen's Advisory Board, phrased it, "'You may rest assured that whatever is un-Virginian is wrong.'" Page and

³⁴Bryan cited in *ibid*.

Sara Pryor likewise reflected this state chauvinism and, according to Thomas L. Connelly, illustrated "the inbred conceit that characterized citizens of the Dominion from colonial times. It was part of a Virginian's heritage to believe that his state was the Cradle of Democracy."³⁵ That conceit, however, had been deflated by the ruins and wastelands which marked their historic sites.

According to the APVA's Gospel of Preservation, the past was most important for its influence on the present and the future. As one leader noted, "we cherish our past for the sake of our future and so while preserving the one we are building the other for ages yet to come." Believing firmly that the individual shaped the environment, Joseph Bryan advised, "I do not see how a better service can be rendered our present generation than by holding up before them constantly renewed exemplars of the former men of dignity, character and learning, who made the old standard of Virginia morality and patriotism so high." Quite similarly, James Alston Cabell, FFV politician and member of the Gentlemen's Advisory Board, called that inspirational service the sole object of history, whereby "the virtue of one generation was transfused, by the magic of example, into several." J. L. M. Curry, in fact, went so far as to say that "battle-fields and birth places are nothing" except means "to kindle loftier aspirings and

³⁵ Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, p. 1; Edward V. Valentine, "My Recollections: Manners and Customs," December 14, 1923 (draft), VM; Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), pp. 40-41. David Potter has suggested that this intimate relation between the land and the people in the South is part of its regional folk culture; see his "The Enigma of the South," in The South and the Sectional Conflict (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), p. 15. C. Vann Woodward, on the other hand, saw it as their protection of a regional identity caused by their fears of northern domination; see his "The Search for Southern Identity," in The Burden of Southern History, Rev. ed. (New York: The New American Library, 1968), p. 20.

stimulate to grander deeds."³⁶

Historic preservation also served genealogical needs through the restoration of a family home, burial ground, or ancestral site. The family home, greatly prized by Victorians generally, symbolized strength and continuity through the years; its loss was a traumatic and ominous event. As Joseph Bryan explained, it was "something even more than a death in a family for the lives of men are at best limited, while an old house . . . may go on from generation to generation comforting, protecting and encouraging with all its sacred memories and associations the children and the children's children of the founder." After the Civil War many ancestral homes in Virginia wasted away as planters moved to the city--a "veritable exodus" according to Cash--and abandoned their mansions to occupancy by poor blacks and whites. A few preservationists reclaimed their old homesteads after gaining wealth in the cities. Joseph Bryan, for example, found an identity and felt at ease working on his old family home at Eagle Point. As he worked on the "old home down in Gloucester" he admitted to his old Confederate commander that he could not "imagine anything more delightful than to get off there away from telegraphs and railroad cars." The return to ancestral homes and genealogy represented the resurgence of the southern genteel rural tradition. The romanticism and sensibility which it expressed, claimed C. Vann Woodward, led to the "fancied virtues and vices, airs and attitudes" of the aristocracy being

³⁶"Jamestown Annual Report, 1922-23," unsigned carbon copy, Box 5, APVA; Joseph Bryan to John B. Henneman, September 8, 1898, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; James A. Cabell, "An Address . . . to the League of Virginia Municipalities," 1907, Cabell Papers, VHS; J. L. M. Curry, "Lessons Of The Yorktown Centennial: An Address," October 22, 1881, VHS.

"exhumed and admired."³⁷

The growth of the APVA benefited from a parallel historical movement, the cult of the Lost Cause; indeed prominent APVA officials such as the Bryans, the Currys, and the Ellysons gave equal support to colonial and Confederate preservation. In fact the two movements were interrelated as to their interpretation of history. Virginia, according to Connelly, led the Lost Cause movement which on the national level was best represented by Sara Pryor and Thomas Nelson Page, both APVA leaders. In Virginia the Lost Cause, like the work of historic preservation, buoyed deflated pride and salved the wounds of war.³⁸ Both were aspects of the traditionalist revival as old-fashioned elites attempted to recoup their strength.

All in all the motivation which fired the APVA reflected the premises of its Gospel of Preservation: duty and fealty to the Old Dominion must be proven by the aristocracy of birth; the citizenry reared during Reconstruction and Readjusterism must be reeducated; the links between colonial and Confederate must be documented; the frenetic present must be soothed by the romantic past in order to keep a proper perspective; and foremost, present generations must be convinced that the traditional culture and its select custodians had value in countering the current malaise. The APVA's mission thereby dovetailed with that of conservative, elite, and paternalistic rule. The noblesse oblige of Virginia traditionalists,

³⁷ Joseph Bryan to Thomas Pinckney, May 22, 1897, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Cash, The Mind of the South, p. 194; also see Dabney, Virginia, p. 442; Joseph Bryan to John S. Mosby, August 30, 1902, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 157.

³⁸ Connelly and Bellows, God and General Longstreet, pp. 43, 45.

preservationists would claim, necessitated their adoption and fulfillment of the Gospel of Preservation.

The Feminine Hand in Historic Preservation

Although the Gentlemen's Advisory Board generally performed the public speaking and broadly set the preservationists' agenda, the APVA during these years was mostly a women's organization. As such, it reflected the Victorian and Old Virginia notions of woman's proper place and role in society. Shaped by women's roots in church work, patriotic organizations, and women's societies, the APVA's Gospel of Preservation often bore a feminine tone and mission. The cult of southern womanhood, especially seen in the oratory of Thomas Nelson Page, placed women on a romantic pedestal where they were idealized and romanticized almost out of human proportion. Yet at the same time they were charged with the protection of home, culture, religion, and virtue--a particularly difficult task as industrial capitalism metamorphosed the traditional society. According to the cult, women were expected to retain the traditions of the old home and plantation in spite of the rapid pace of urbanization. The family "remained the center of most women's lives," Anne F. Scott explained. "More than any other Americans, perhaps, Southerners put their faith in the family as the central institution of society, faith that was slow to change."³⁹

Domesticity was the rule for southern women, but their responsibilities in this sphere steadily grew in the new century. "If women were to be effective guardians of the home and its morality," Carl Degler explained,

³⁹Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 213.

"then they might well find it necessary to act in the world in order to protect the home and preserve its morality." Southern churches, for example, encouraged women to work for benevolent causes such as temperance, public morality, and historic preservation, yet they officially opposed the women's rights and suffrage campaigns. Church work for many southern women, whether it was restoring the gravestones of the dead or the sobriety of their community, thus became a stepping stone from the domestic to the public sphere.⁴⁰

Literary societies--and the APVA played that role in some cities--offered women the chance for self-development and education, precious commodities in the male-dominated society. Women socialized through the APVA and developed a community of interests which, much like the gospel, was bound to their class and culture. With the development of the cities and middle-class life more women found the time and energy to join these clubs and spur the various causes. Cynthia Coleman in 1885 explained, for example: "We formed a club for literary culture, not for amusement at all but profit. Elevating the tone of society is a high mark at which to aim." The APVA likewise would hold literary exercises or historical lectures at its sites to inform the audience. Women's influence over culture was exerted throughout the land. "Culture seemed increasingly the sphere of women," Alan Trachtenberg observed. "The rise to power of culture was at once the rise of a powerful idea of the feminine, of woman's role: the dispensing of values nonmaterial, nonaggressive, nonexploitative. As culture came to seem the repository of elevating thoughts and cleansing

⁴⁰ Carl N. Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 298; see also Scott, The Southern Lady, p. 147.

emotions, it seemed all the more as if the rough world of masculine enterprise had called into being its redemptive opposite."⁴¹

The Gospel of Preservation also prompted women to join historical societies. Precedents for the APVA were well established by the MVLA and soldiers' relief societies. With her eye on the next generation, Sara Pryor described women's role: "to borrow from the fires of the heroic past to kindle the fires of the future; to preserve to that end the memory of the deeds of those whose lives have set them apart in the history of our country." Virtuous women taught a reverence for tradition and history, claimed Episcopal Bishop A. M. Randolph, member of the APVA Advisory Board: "As a general rule, society developes [sic] these ideas in the realm of religion and ethics, through the impulse originating in the mind of woman." Virginia women, likewise, were the backbone of the Lost Cause and gave that cult religious overtones.⁴²

The APVA from its inception had the feminine imprint. With the exception of the Advisory Board, all of the officers and incorporators were women. Considering themselves "the representative women of Virginia," the leadership in fact represented the "best" families, the leading figures, and the most powerful names in the Old Dominion. Even after five years, one editor thought, albeit incorrectly, that the membership was "composed

⁴¹ Cynthia Coleman to her sister, February 18, 1885, Coleman-Tucker Papers, Box 57, CWM; Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 145. See also Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 23.

⁴² Mrs. R. A. Pryor, My Day; Reminiscences of a Long Life (New York: Macmillan Company, 1909), p. 425, A. M. Randolph, "Restoration of Church at Jamestown, Va.," Paper presented at APVA General Meeting, May 14, 1906, in MB/APVA, 1902-07, VHS. For the Lost Cause and women, see Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 156.

entirely of ladies."⁴³ Since the Victorian domestic sphere precluded women from public speaking, Lora Ellyson, then associate president of the APVA, received an approbation from her husband, Lieutenant Governor James Taylor Ellyson, when she went before the General Assembly in 1903 to lobby for public funds. Submitting to his wishes, she refrained from further lobbying and advised that "I could not ask the ladies to do what I can not lead in." Fifteen years later these Victorian strictures had loosened sufficiently to enable Ellyson to appear before the General Assembly and again plead for Jamestown funding.⁴⁴ When the legislature proved recalcitrant to these appeals, John Lesslie Hall, professor of history at William and Mary and consistent APVA supporter, addressed the legislators in 1919 and shamed them for ignoring "our Marys and Marthas . . . [who were] standing by the tottering walls of the First Temple of America." "Shall we make them beggars?" he asked. "Must they hold up supplicating hands to ignorant parvenus for farthings and pennies?"⁴⁵ The following year the APVA accordingly received a handsome state appropriation.

The preservationists' campaign to reform public morality reflected their own class and cultural background. The Gospel of Preservation, as they interpreted it, forecast individualistic solutions and personal duty to society. This perspective, Sheila Rothman observed, "gave a distinctly narrow and class-bound quality to social programs." These

⁴³"Souvenir of the Midsummer Night's Dream," 1889, APVA files; "Interesting Publication," The Lynchburg News, September 12, 1894, Tucker-Coleman Papers, CWM.

⁴⁴Lora Ellyson to Mrs. Bagby, February 9, 1903, Bagby Papers, VHS; March 5, 1918, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS.

⁴⁵John Lesslie Hall, "The Meeting Place of the First Virginia Assembly," in "Exercises and Addresses at the Celebration of the 300th Anniversary . . .," August 15, 1919, Hall Papers, CWM.

notions "ultimately defined problems in moral terms and, therefore, focused ameliorative efforts more on the person than on the system." As a result, their attitudes were "more comfortable with voluntary than with state action. Since social problems were finally moral ones, solutions demanded the sensitive intervention of the philanthropic individual, not the heavy-handed involvement of the state."⁴⁶ As an organization the APVA declined to take a stance on most of the social reform issues of the day, but its leaders and members were visibly active in leading other causes.

The issue of woman's suffrage divided the ranks of Virginia preservationists. While the majority of the traditionalist female leadership apparently refrained from the campaign, a number were prominent in the suffrage ranks and the Equal Suffrage League, including Lila Meade Valentine, Mary Cooke Branch Munford, Sally Nelson Robins who was to become an APVA vice president, and the popular author Mary Johnston. The Gentlemen's Advisory Board spoke out vehemently against the suffrage however. Edward V. Valentine called it an "offensive disease" led by fanatics who "had a contempt for Southern women." While Curry labeled it an "abomination," Thomas Nelson Page, according to his biographer, "wanted woman kept on her pedestal, safe from contamination." Joseph Bryan claimed that the issue was superfluous since "the wishes of the women of Virginia . . . were in the main carried out by their husbands, sons & brothers." Lyon G. Tyler, on the other hand, was the most prominent male Virginian affiliated with the APVA to support the suffrage campaign. The most significant opponents of the suffrage perhaps were the Virginia women who chose

⁴⁶ Sheila M. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1978), pp. 63, 64.

not to speak. Most likely they considered the vote to be a distraction from the home sphere or a threat to the security of Jim Crow.⁴⁷ While preservationists were divided over the suffrage, they nonetheless united to affirm that historic preservation was a facet of women's domestic responsibility. The symbols of the past in her hands would offer sons and husbands potent inspiration for the present and future. The Gospel of Preservation, as voiced by the female preservationists, therefore asked women to sacrifice and labor in these sacred tasks and thereby insure the protection of family, virtue, and tradition in the Old Dominion.

Early Preservation Efforts in Williamsburg and Fredericksburg

The mission of the APVA and its evocation of the Gospel of Preservation were epitomized by the work to preserve Williamsburg after the desolation and neglect of two generations. The Civil War ruined the former colonial capital and a pall of defeat and gloom pervaded the town for years. There Cynthia Coleman and Mary J. Galt both experienced the war firsthand and their memories were seared by the trauma. In the 1880s Williamsburg's poverty was ever present as residents stripped old and historic structures, the youth packed their bags, and even the college closed its doors in 1881. Cynthia Coleman, quite sensitive about the town's plight, even resented northern visitors to Williamsburg and she admitted: "I do not like these fat, sleek Yankees to come and spy upon our poverty."

⁴⁷ Edward V. Valentine, "Woman's Suffrage," n.d., Valentine Articles, VM; Curry quoted in Rice, J. L. M. Curry, p. 158; Harriet R. Holman, "The Literary Career Of Thomas Nelson Page, 1884-1910," Doctoral Dissertation, 1947, Duke University, p. 212; Joseph Bryan to Mrs. Annie D. Gray, March 3, 1894, Bryan Letterbook, VHS. Lyon G. Tyler's support may be found in Equal Suffrage League file, Tyler Papers, CWM. For women's opposition, see Degler, At Odds, pp. 340-350.

The tenor of the "stagnant and depressed" town was worsened, claimed Lyon G. Tyler who reopened the college under state auspices in 1888, by the "free drinking" and prevalence of saloons in the town. Williamsburg, in the minds of Coleman and Tyler, needed a thorough overhaul.⁴⁸

Williamsburg's leading families therefore undertook the restoration of the town and its values. The local branch of the APVA exerted such a strong influence on the town that Coleman's granddaughter compared its influence to "the church." "You didn't dare disapprove of it," she recounted. "It was like motherhood, and all that." During the first decade Coleman, a descendant of the famous Tuckers of Williamsburg, exercised a dominant hand over the branch. At times she cajoled like a southern belle; other times she was an indomitable wielder of influence. One local historian in fact claimed that "few stronger personalities ever lived in Williamsburg than Cynthia." Fiercely committed to a defense of Virginia and its traditions, she was also "untamed and . . . unreconstructed" in her loyalty to the Lost Cause.⁴⁹

An eloquent champion of the Gospel of Preservation, Coleman evoked the past to rekindle the strength and courage to dominate the future. Sounding much like Brooks Adams, she warned that "it is a law of nature, that the rising grandeur and opulence of a nation must be balanced by a decay of its heroic virtues." Obviously the wealth and power of the North,

⁴⁸Cynthia Coleman to George [P. Coleman], March 22, 1887, Coleman-Tucker Papers, Box 57, CWM; Lyon G. Tyler, Farewell Address . . ., June 10, 1919, pp. 9, 15, in Galt Papers III, CWM. Tyler incidentally helped to lead the town's temperance drive.

⁴⁹"APVA a Part of Life for Dr. Kimbrough," Newport News Daily Press, January 21, 1979; Parke Rouse, Jr., Cows on the Campus: Williamsburg in Bygone Days (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1973), p. 154; William H. Payne to Cynthia Coleman, February 21, 1891, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 58, CWM.

she claimed, were to blame for America's flaccid and gilded ways. The preservation of Williamsburg, therefore, would symbolize the hardier and superior civilization of the colonial era. She admitted openly that the village was important for its associations and lessons, not its architecture. "The houses themselves possess no special architectural attraction, other than the softened lines or neutral tints of age, not even amounting always to picturesqueness."⁵⁰ Yet her sentiments accorded with the APVA's Gospel of Preservation and its intended rehabilitation of Virginia's reputation and society.

The focus of the APVA in Williamsburg centered on the colonial Magazine, the foundations of the Capitol, and Bruton Church. Since the Revolution, the Powder Horn or Magazine (1715) had been used variously as a house of worship, a dancing school, an arsenal, and finally as a stable. When the APVA purchased it in 1889, the preservationists received the praise of the Richmond Times--published by Coleman's cousin, Joseph Bryan--which noted that the structure earlier "should have been religiously preserved from decay as a relic."⁵¹ After its purchase and stabilization, the Powder Horn became a museum for colonial relics.

The Williamsburg branch of the APVA also focused attention on the site and foundations of the early eighteenth-century Capitol, which had burned in 1832. Calling it "holy ground" for its ability to spark patriotic inspiration and civic duty, Coleman inaugurated a drive to purchase its lot which had "passed into the hands of strangers," namely the Old

⁵⁰Cynthia Coleman, miscellaneous papers, n.d., and "The Annals of Williamsburg," MS., n.d., in Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 101, CWM.

⁵¹[Joseph Bryan], "The Old Powder-Horn," The Richmond Daily Times, January 19, 1890.

Dominion Land Company (ODLC), a land speculator and subsidiary of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. After APVA entreaties to C & O magnate Collis P. Huntington, the ODLIC donated the land in 1897 to the "worthy cause" which the APVA represented.⁵² While the APVA lauded the businessmen for their patriotism, the two firms probably expected benefits from the economic boosterism and traditionalist leadership which the APVA promised.

Throughout the next generation the APVA toyed with the idea of rebuilding the Capitol and converting it into a museum. After the local Phi Beta Kappa Society officially urged the reconstruction, the APVA appointed a committee--including Tyler, Page, and W. A. R. Goodwin--which endorsed the idea, but cautioned that it would, according to a "conservative estimate," cost at least \$35,000. Shortly after, the APVA leadership, fearful of such a financial burden, requested that Phi Beta Kappa itself undertake the reconstruction.⁵³

Williamsburg preservationists also helped the community to restore Bruton Church, built in 1715 in the colonial capital. The structure by the late 1880s had become, according to Coleman, "a miserable piece of botchwork," and Lyon G. Tyler spoke before the APVA annual meeting in 1896 urging that they undertake a proper restoration. Bruton rector W. A. R.

⁵²Cynthia Coleman, untitled address at YMCA, Baltimore, March 1896, and circular letter, n.d., Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 103, CWM; Mrs. George W. Bagby to Mary J. Galt, July 5, 1895, in Galt Papers III, CWM; C. B. Orcutt to Mrs. R. M. Smith, March 11, 1897, in MB/APVA, 1896-1897, VHS. See also Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937), p. 181. The C & O also gave the APVA the Palace Ice House a few years later.

⁵³Samuel H. Yonge to Wm. Ellis Jones, November 26, 1909, Yonge Papers 1299-7, UVA; January 4, 1910, Annual Meeting, MB/APVA, 1908-14, VHS. Incidentally Goodwin would use this Phi Beta Kappa connection in 1924 in his first bid for Rockefeller support.

Goodwin later persuaded the local branch, in fact, to drop its work on the Powder Horn and assume the task of restoring the colonial governor's pew in the church.⁵⁴ During the next few years the local preservationists invested over \$2,000--a sizable sum when moneys were supposedly scarce--to restore the pew to its royal splendor. By the Tercentennial of 1907 the church had been restored to an eighteenth-century appearance and reflected Goodwin's own attempts to restore colonial values and traditions.

Goodwin was enamored with the historical associations of Williamsburg. Its past, he thought, reflected a harmonious, sober, and civilized society; it represented particularly an object lesson for emulation by the modern twentieth century. The rector's appreciation for the past stemmed in good part from his dissatisfaction with the present. By the second decade of the twentieth century, in fact, he was a firm disciple of the social gospel. Condemning the excesses of the sweat shop, the terror of anarchism, and the avarice of the rich, he felt that "civilization has grown materialistic, and greedy, and full of lust and ambition, and has become dominated by the will to power." In the United States "class distinctions are growing more intense," he warned, and "materialism is gripping the souls of men and throttling the spirit of brotherhood." As rich and poor, manager and worker battled in "industrial war," he posited that "capital and labour must stand together, or fall together." Since America's population was "heterogeneous and hyphenated," she must especially "consolidate the moral and spiritual impulses of her people"

⁵⁴Cynthia Coleman to sister, September 12, 1886, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 57, CWM; January 4, 1896, MB/APVA, 1896-1897, VHS; November 10, 1904, Minutes, APVA, CWM. See also Stephen P. Dorsey, Early English Churches in America, 1607-1807 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 60.

and strive for a "higher national unity."⁵⁵ Goodwin claimed that the citizen, rich and poor alike, needed to relearn the past virtues and traditions which Williamsburg represented. Although Goodwin left Williamsburg for fifteen years, his stamp was firmly imprinted upon the town.

Along with Coleman and Goodwin, Lyon G. Tyler was the other member of the triumvirate shaping Williamsburg's first restoration. As president of the college, he naturally promoted its influence; other times he acted as the "mouth piece" for Cynthia Coleman in the APVA; and, in many other ways he worked to rehabilitate the image of the FFVs. In all his capacities, he was an active booster for Williamsburg: in the preservation of its past, the reformation of its morality, and the encouragement of industry. As a historian--he published the William and Mary Quarterly, edited Tyler's Quarterly and authored numerous monographs--and educator, he preached the Gospel of Preservation to his students and readers. Reviewing the deeds at Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown, he noted: "It is impossible that the students can live in the presence of these and other similar associations without being inspired by them." Schooling at the college, he promised, will "quicken the pulse and inspire the heart of the young with all those elevating principles and lofty desires which make ambition virtue." Like Coleman and Goodwin, Tyler prized history not simply for its implicit sanction of conservative leadership, but for its hold on the future as well.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Wm. A. R. Goodwin, The Church Enchained (New York: E. P. Dutton And Company, 1916), pp. 21, 56, 67; see also Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), pp. 11-12.

⁵⁶ Cynthia Coleman to Parke [Mrs. George] Bagby, September 23, 1889, Bagby Papers 67, VHS; Lyon G. Tyler quoted in "Settlement of Jamestown," The Richmond Times, May 14, 1895.

The APVA also worked in Fredericksburg to preserve what it called sacred shrines of the revolutionary era. The Mary Washington house, a simple house of the eighteenth century, was for sale in 1890 when a "Chicago syndicate" attempted to purchase and remove it to the Columbian Exposition. The only APVA member in town, Francis Tucker Carmichael, a sister of Joseph Bryan, wired Belle Bryan and asked for assistance in keeping the venerated Virginia house.⁵⁷ Moving it to Chicago would have been an affront to the Old Dominion's pride and a victory for Yankee arrogance. Joseph and Belle Bryan promptly and personally secured the purchase and the "Home of Mary, the mother of Washington" became another APVA shrine. Mary Washington, according to Sara Pryor who authored a biography of her, should have been lauded by modern women because she was "industrious . . . , self-denying, diligent, and frugal."⁵⁸

Jamestown As Mecca

The central concern of the APVA throughout these years was the preservation of Jamestown. As Belle Bryan phrased it: "From the first moment of our legal existence . . . the hopes and plans, labors and responsibilities of the Association might be well summed up in one word, and that word Jamestown. This sacred charge has at once been our inspiration and our goal . . . and our constant endeavor is to keep it and its pathetic history

⁵⁷According to a later Times-Dispatch, Chicagoans sought to purchase anything historic, such as Richmond's Libby Prison, to enhance their exposition; "Home of Washington's Mother Was Saved by Richmond Women," The Richmond Times-Dispatch, n.d., in PRM, 1922-1923, APVA; see also "Report 1893," Mary Washington Branch Correspondence, Box 2, APVA, and Joseph Bryan to J. L. Margue, April 22, 1890, Bryan Letterbook, VHS.

⁵⁸"Property Acquired by the Association," unidentified clipping, n.d., MB/APVA, 1901-1902, VHS; Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, The Mother of Washington and Her Times (New York: Macmillan Company, 1903), p. 181.

before our people." Jamestown was "holy ground" for its associations with the Anglo-Saxon race, Protestant religion, and representative government. John Lesslie Hall described it aptly for the APVA in the pilgrimage of 1895: "This island is to us what those sacred spots were to the older nations. It is at once our Acropolis, our Palatine Hill, and our isle of Thanet. Let us ever love it and preserve it."⁵⁹ Threatened by the erosion of the James, desecration by vandals, and spoliation by commercial speculators, the rescue of Jamestown became the APVA's *raison d'être*.

Virginia preservationists were particularly interested in Jamestown and its symbolism as a teaching tool. This "shrine of patriotism" would be used to reeducate the youth raised during the tumult of the last generation and inspire them through its "lessons of loyalty." Implementing that goal, the APVA brought thousands of children and adults through numerous pilgrimages to the island, some of which were in conjunction with the College of William and Mary. At the college's own pilgrimage of 1891, just two years after the final defeat of Mahoneism, John Lesslie Hall told his audience that Jamestown offered valuable lessons: "Let us realize that Virginia needs living heroes; that she needs earnest and devoted Smiths to save her from drones and laggards, and from treacherous leaders; that she needs Dales to give her strong and well executed laws, and Spotswoods to develop her wonderful resources, so that the desert and solitary place may blossom as the rose." Reminding the students and audience of their duty to the Old Dominion, he asked for "help to lift the burdens which have so long oppressed her." Finally, Hall sounded a recurrent theme

⁵⁹"Report of the President for 1903," YB, 1901-1904, p. 6; Hall, "Introductory Address . . . Jamestown Celebration," May 13, 1891, Hall Papers, CWM.

that Jamestown was a "mecca of the soul." In a nation which was making the traumatic shift from farm to city, he thought that it was "good for us to leave the busy haunts of men; . . . to forget the hum of the engine and the whistle of the locomotive, and to repair to this quiet temple of nature."⁶⁰ Since Jamestown represented a rustic, primitive age, it reinforced the antimodernist feelings of Hall and others who were troubled by the fast pace of modern change.

Jamestown was important, moreover, as a historical document which proved Virginia's priority over New England in colonization and government. Since it was the nation's first settlement, Lyon G. Tyler claimed, "its first log cabin is of more consequence to the Union at large than the proud mansion of the chief executive." The APVA considered Jamestown "our modern Pompeii" and declared in its own version of one-hundred-percent Americanism that "every detail of the life of that colony is of concern to all true Americans."⁶¹ The island also illustrated the evolution of America and its progress; its humble and simple beginnings were a stark contrast with the great wealth and power of the modern American empire. Lastly, Jamestown was noteworthy as a contrast to Plymouth Rock. Often claiming that New Englanders revered their past and its symbols, Virginia preservationists hoped that the restoration of Jamestown would not only counterbalance New England's strong hand in the writing of colonial history,

⁶⁰ Belle Bryan, "Report of the President for 1903," YB, 1901-1904, p. 6; Hall, "Introductory Address . . . Jamestown Celebration," May 13, 1891.

⁶¹ Tyler quoted in "Settlement of Jamestown," The Richmond Times, May 14, 1895; the orator incidentally was mistaken on a number of counts. Since St. Augustine was Catholic and Spanish, the Anglo-Saxon excluded it from consideration as America's first settlement. Jamestown also had no log cabins; Mrs. R. W. Watkins, "Circular Used by Membership Committee," YB, 1905-1908, p. 64, emphasis added.

but persuade Southerners to imitate colonial virtues as well. The APVA thus realized that Jamestown was a historical document of great potency in their work to reform the individual and society.

After three years of negotiations and legal maneuvers, the APVA acquired twenty-two and one-half acres of Jamestown Island--the portion which contained the ruins of the church and its graveyard--as a donation in 1892.⁶² In the ensuing years it became the Association's sacred trust, not that of the federal government, to preserve and protect this hallowed site. Yearly pilgrimages were held by the Association beginning in 1895 to commemorate the Anglo-Saxon's founding of Virginia. The 1895 pilgrimage brought about 4,000 people to the island, including 700 from the capital city who were described as "the best people of Richmond," for ceremonies, parades, and addresses.⁶³ Later pilgrims included a wide variety of professional groups such as the American Bankers Association, the American Tobacco Association, and the Southern Educational Association. "Once visiting it," an APVA leader predicted, "interest in all that it

⁶²The motives which prompted E. E. Barney, a former Ohio industrialist, to donate the plot to the APVA are unclear. Most likely he realized that the legal rights to the church could easily be contested. Moreover, the Barneys expected a financial windfall from the sale of the remainder of the island. Throughout the 1890s and after they attempted to sell the island to the federal government; in the early 1900s the asking price was \$150,000, but by 1916 it was \$350,000. Quite early Parke Bagby recognized Barney as "our enemy" because of his ambitions for the island. See Parke C. Bagby to Mary J. Galt, January 10, 1895, Galt Papers III, CWM; for the sale prices see Mrs. Louise J. Barney to Lyon G. Tyler, April 19, [1907?], Tyler Papers, CWM, and undated meeting of May 1916 [p. 84], MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS.

⁶³"Fete on the Island," unidentified clipping, May 1895, Organizations file, APVA. These APVA pilgrimages were quite different from celebrations held earlier in the century. In 1822, 2,000 male visitors from as far away as Baltimore held a lively fest there; "the scene was enlivened by music and dancing, . . . the faro table and the wheel of fortune." See, "Jamestown Island: The Observance there tomorrow of Founders Day," unidentified clipping, May 12, 1895, in Organizations file, APVA.

stands for in our national life; all that is lasting and beneficent that has emanated [sic] from it must be imperishably implanted in the heart of even the average tourist." School groups were also encouraged to come when "attended by their teachers" who would instruct them concerning the historic places.⁶⁴

All groups in fact were invited to Jamestown, except blacks. Official guidelines stated that "negro excursions or picnic parties are not admitted." In spite of the known fact that the first blacks came to Virginia via Jamestown, the APVA quite early declared that the sacred site was a shrine for white America. Years later, J. M. Gandy of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute requested permission from the APVA to place a monument on Jamestown Island to those first black immigrants. After a discussion at a general meeting, the preservationists denied the request stating that "Jamestown was the first permanent Colony of the English speaking people in this Country . . . and the incident of bringing the negroes by the Dutch ship to Jamestown forms no such part in the life of the Colony as will justify our granting permission to erect a memorial to that event."⁶⁵ Clearly traditionalist Virginians wanted to forget slavery and portray Jamestown only in its best light.

The preservation work of the APVA largely consisted of the stabilization of the ruins, archaeological investigation of the sites, and the

⁶⁴Mrs. John B. Lightfoot, "Report of Jamestown Committee," YB, 1908-1910, p. 36; Central Committee, April 2, 1901, MB/APVA, 1899-1901, VHS.

⁶⁵Apparently the site was open to black individuals (presumably servants), but "negro excursions" were forbidden; see Ellen M. Bagby, "APVA," n.d., in Miscellaneous Broad-sides, Yonge Papers 1299-8, UVA. For the general meeting see November 6, 1916, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS. Somewhat ironically the APVA would employ trusted Negro custodians, who often acted as interpreters, at Jamestown and Williamsburg as early as the late 1920s.

abatement of river erosion. Mary J. Galt and Parke Bagby (Mrs. George W.) were most influential in this work and were initially advised by New York architect Howard Constable. Concerned most with the church tower, the principal extant section of the seventeenth-century structure, Galt declared that the "real true patriotic . . . and artistic ideas" were "to alter as little as possible, to avoid all artificial appearance . . . [and] to keep all attractiveness subordinate to the main features." She claimed to carry out these precepts "as they take care of old buildings in Italy"; her aim was to "preserve and not make new."⁶⁶

Galt likewise decided to retain the rough, primitive look for their part of the island, so unlike the adjacent farm which was "a beautifully kept farm" having "the regular 'florist-seedsman's book' look." Hoping that the APVA land would never look like that, she sympathized with anti-modernist sentiments and advised that "dignity and solemnity must cloth[e] the ruins--and there must always be a pathetic and romantic idea . . . and the old place altogether should not look modernly 'smart.'" One danger to this natural look was a plan announced in New York City in 1902 to purchase the entire island and convert it into a resort. As a northern preservationist writing in the New York Times then reported, "Speculators are trying to get the island for a trolley terminal and pleasure resort, probably with a view to setting up merry-go-rounds and similar money-making devices."⁶⁷ Although the plans came to naught, the ire of Virginia

⁶⁶ Mary J. Galt to Mrs. Bagby, March 23, 1896 and May 23, 1901, Bagby Papers 78, VHS. In the 1880s Galt had formally studied art, taught at a Norfolk studio, and was inspired by her uncle, famed sculptor Alexander Galt.

⁶⁷ Mary J. Galt to Mrs. Bagby, March 23, 1896, Bagby Papers 78, VHS; "Plans for Jamestown Island," letter to the editor by Edward H. Hall, New York Times, February 28, 1902, in March 4, 1902, MB/APVA, 1901-1902, VHS. Dr. Hall was the secretary of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society.

preservationists had been raised and the APVA became more determined to hold on to its cherished possession.

While the APVA resolutely retained its section of the island, Galt's preservation efforts sometimes clashed with others in the organization who tried to commercialize the venture. The plight of the old magazine, over which the river waters ebbed and flowed, was a case in point. When suggestions were voiced that the magazine should be dismantled and its bricks "stamped & sold as souvenirs," Galt responded with outrage and asked, "What is the Asso[ciation] for?"⁶⁸ Instead she suggested salvage archaeology and the lifting of the old fort to higher ground. Other money-making schemes were proposed, including the sale of Jamestown popcorn, but they amounted to very little. Some preservationists obviously felt that their acclaimed holy and sacred task did not exclude the possibility of making a profit.

River erosion was the most pressing threat to the island and it swallowed, according to one account, as much as four feet of shoreline per year in some sections. Hurried excavations were undertaken on some graves as the waters approached. In spite of his repeated denunciations of special-interest legislation, Joseph Bryan joined other Advisory Board members and lobbied for state and federal aid to protect the island. Largely through the efforts of Thomas Nelson Page, whom the APVA appointed to appear in Washington before a congressional committee, and Mrs. J. L. M. Curry, an APVA vice president who personally interceded with the congressmen,

⁶⁸ Mary J. Galt to Mrs. Bagby, January 15, 1895 (draft) and Mary Newton to Mollie [Lightfoot?], January 8, 1895, Galt Papers III, CWM; December 4, 1894 and January 22, 1895, MB/APVA, VHS.

an appropriation of \$10,000 was authorized in 1894 for a breakwater.⁶⁹ Completed in June, 1895, the breakwater unfortunately proved to be a dismal failure as it soon broke to pieces. After other lobbying drives by the preservationists, Congress appropriated an immediate \$15,000 and later other moneys for a stone revetment. Constructed by the U.S. military under the supervision of its engineer Samuel H. Yonge (whom the APVA later appointed to its Advisory Board), the revetment would eventually cover the entire shoreline.⁷⁰

As arrangements were made in 1898 for the construction of this revetment, however, war with Spain broke out and "the United States engineers were summoned afar," the APVA sadly reported, "to destroy, not to build up." Leaders of the Association particularly resented this delay in construction and it probably colored their attitudes toward the war. While the hereditary societies generally brandished "a jingoistic spirit which welcomed the Spanish American War and the imperialist adventures at the turn of the century,"⁷¹ the sentiments of the APVA leaders when penned or

⁶⁹Ellen M. Bagby, "Virginia and the Nation's Debt to the APVA," n.d., Organizations file, APVA; Quarterly Meeting, October 3, 1893, MB/APVA, 1892-1893, VHS; Joseph Bryan to W. P. Craighill, October 29, 1894, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Rice, J. L. M. Curry, p. 224n.

⁷⁰Mary Stanard, Jamestown and the A.P.V.A. (Richmond: Wm. Ellis Jones, n.d.), in Jamestown Miscellaneous, APVA; see also A. MacKenzie to John Lamb [M.C.], March 10, 1904, Jamestown Papers, VHS; Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. apparently overlooked these federal grants in behalf of the APVA when he claimed that a later Tennessee organization was the first to receive financial aid from the federal government prior to 1926. These Jamestown appropriations, although firmly in the tradition of federal support to maintain navigable rivers, were probably the first federal grants to assist a private preservation cause; see Hosmer, Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), p. 72.

⁷¹"Report of Jamestown Committee," YB, 1898, p. 30; Wallace Evan Davies, Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 310.

expressed in print were decidedly in opposition. Although one historian claimed that Virginia offered "eager cooperation" in the war, Joseph Bryan, Richmond's foremost citizen and publicist, noted on the day that the United States formally declared war that if a referendum was held in Virginia "the war party would be snowed under deeper than any avalanche that ever fell from Mont Blanc." Even after the armistice was declared, Bryan claimed that "the war is more unpopular today than it ever has been." At the same time, some female preservationists were publicly expressing their hopes for a speedy American troop withdrawal from the Caribbean.⁷²

Bryan's war opposition, which was seconded by Curry, stemmed from his belief that the reformation of America's own character was the more important task. Fearing the consequences of imperial war, he regretted "the departure from our old course with absolute alarm." "I am alarmed lest pride and 'fulness [sic] of bread' should lead our country astray from the faith of simplicity and moderation which had been so clearly laid down for us by the founders of the Republic." Cynthia Coleman likewise feared that expansionism would, according to her reading of the laws of nature, sap American virtue and internally weaken the nation.⁷³ Even worse, Bryan presciently added, the United States faced a "terrible crisis in our history" since "the wise conservatism and simple devotion of our

⁷²Virginius Dabney, *Virginia*, p. 406; Joseph Bryan to Thomas Pinckney, April 25, 1898 and Bryan to J. S. Hensberger, September 24, 1898, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; "Report of Hampton Branch," *YB*, 1898, p. 47.

⁷³Joseph Bryan to Moses D. Hoge, May 6, 1898, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Cynthia Coleman, no title, n.d., Miscellaneous Papers, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 101, CWM. Bryan's rationale was quite common among antiwar traditionalists who publicly invoked an "obedience to ancient injunction"; see Paul Nagel, *This Sacred Trust: American Nationality, 1798-1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 254.

forefathers to our own country, to our own people, and to attending to our own business, is likely to be broken down by the consequences of this unjustifiable war."⁷⁴ Bryan, Curry, and others also premised their war opposition upon fears that more dark races would become citizens and lead to further corruption in the federal government. The Gospel of Preservation, as represented by Jamestown and the Founding Fathers, demanded that the energies of the APVA promote moral reform, not overseas adventurism.

With war's end the Association redoubled its efforts to secure federal and state appropriations for Jamestown. Congress authorized \$15,000 in 1901 to complete the revetment, and the General Assembly authorized moneys for improvements prior to the Tercentennial of 1907. By 1918 the federal government alone had spent \$50,000 on the erosion project. The ultrapatriotic mood of the Red Scare years in 1919-1920 even pressed the Virginia legislators to increase their funding. When a \$10,000 appropriation was granted early in 1920, John Stewart Bryan's newspaper editorialized that "patriotism largely is historical and can be promoted by visualizing the great deeds of the past. . . . Surely no money could be better spent!"⁷⁵

Public attention on Jamestown peaked during the Tercentennial in 1907. Contrary to the APVA's claim that its resolution of 1900 in behalf

⁷⁴Joseph Bryan to C. D. Fishburne, May 6, 1898, Bryan Letterbook, VHS. Bryan incidentally was opposed to formal imperialism, not economic expansion. As a board member and investor in the Nicaraguan Canal Company, he realized that the war was a boon to the isthmian canal. It is important to note that his views, while not officially those of the Virginia preservationists, were probably common concerning the limitations which traditionalists considered inherent in the old trust and injunctions of the ancients. Somewhat paradoxically, he volunteered for the war effort, but was refused on account of his age.

⁷⁵"Patriotism Vindicated," The Richmond News-Leader, March __, 1920 in PRM, 1919-1920, APVA.

of a national celebration had antedated all others, the call for a Jamestown celebration was first made publicly by John Lesslie Hall in his 1891 Jamestown oration. Four years later and upon the same podium he urged Virginians to seek state and federal funding for the fete. In 1900 Lyon G. Tyler also suggested a national celebration, and likewise assumed credit for the idea. Despite their competing grabs for credit, traditionalists considered the Tercentennial the ideal opportunity to champion Anglo-Saxonism, the cause of Virginia in the nation, and their own custodial care of culture.⁷⁶

Suggesting that the international celebration be held in Richmond, the APVA leaders proposed an exposition which would illustrate "the progress, manners, customs, & c., of the thirteen original colonies and of the States formed from Virginia." Yet Victorian strictures and perhaps their own inexperience kept the Virginia ladies from actively lobbying for the Richmond site. The competing sites of Norfolk and Hampton Roads subsequently won out and led Joseph Bryan to protest, "'You shall not yoke imperial Virginia to Norfolk's commissary wagon!'" In the end, yoke them they did as Norfolk, a military and commercial center, portrayed the progress of the New South in the exposition, rather than the conservative traditionalism so prized by Richmond. Congress likewise appropriated its revenues for "an international naval, marine, and military celebration"; it also allocated \$15,000 for permanent moorings on the James for visitors to the APVA's Jamestown's ruins and the new government monument. The exposition gave the United States military a chance to boast about its big power status; impressive fleets from England, France, Germany, Japan, and

⁷⁶The APVA's resolution supposedly passed on June 12, 1900, yet the minutes disclose no quorum for that day; see MB/APVA, VHS.

other nations also attended. This warlike display, however, drew the protests of some exposition leaders who wished to avoid "'exciting among the people and fostering a spirit of militaryism [sic].'"⁷⁷ Jingoism and the celebration of Jamestown, some claimed, were an unfortunate association.

The APVA's historic ruins received "a very large percentage of the exposition visitors," especially on Jamestown Day when almost 8,000 were in attendance for the APVA's ceremonies. For that occasion the Colonial Dames had refashioned with the approval and encouragement of the APVA the Jamestown colonial church; the reconstruction used a hypothetical design which was based upon St. Luke's Church in Isle of Wight County. From its inception the project was very controversial; when the APVA had voted on the proposal, for example, "members uttering emphatic 'noes' made themselves heard throughout both rooms." Letters to the editor also appeared in Richmond papers denouncing the intended reconstruction.⁷⁸ The style of the design was perpendicular Gothic, a favorite of American antimodernists and admired by many for its medieval associations. According to Barrett Wendell, a Harvard professor and SPNEA friend, "the stubborn material combined with imperfect artistic skill to produce a singularly vital and picturesque effect." These materials, it turned out however, had been stripped from two old colonial homes which had been demolished expressly

⁷⁷"The Ter-Centenary," unidentified clipping, February 2, 1901, Jamestown Tercentennial, Box 7, APVA; Joseph Bryan quoted in John S. Bryan, p. 316; "An Act of the 58th Congress," passed March 3, 1905, in Jamestown Tercentennial, Box 7, APVA; Mary J. Galt to Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor, n.d. [1907], Galt Papers III, CWM.

⁷⁸"Report of Jamestown Committee," YB, 1905-1908, p. 32; "Church Will be Under Diocese," unidentified clipping, n.d., in Washington Branch Record Book, 1894-1917, APVA; General Meeting, May 14, 1906, MB/APVA, 1902-1907, VHS; M.M.T., letter, The Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 3, 1906, in Yonge Papers 1299-3, UVA.

for their salt-glazed brick. The reconstruction may have been a case of "robbing Peter to pay Paul," but the APVA ladies were thoroughly happy when the Colonial Dames deeded the building to them. Upon its dedication, the Memorial Church became a symbol of Protestant unity, "an influence drawing all Christian Churches together, especially those who took part in the Colonial history of our Commonwealth."⁷⁹

All in all, the APVA deserves credit for the protection of Jamestown Island from erosion. The leaders of the Association, however, differed as to what constituted its preservation. While Galt advocated retaining its primitive features and preserving its artifacts, many leaders of the APVA saw Jamestown, symbolized by its Memorial Church, as a recreation of the memories and inspiration associated with the colonial ventures. Since the APVA considered the moral, spiritual and social symbols of early Virginia history the most important aspects of their work, it was somewhat natural that their implementation of the Gospel of Preservation would lead to a hypothetical church reconstruction, a gradual island beautification, and a sanctification of the entire surrounds. This brand of historic preservation may have been considered romantic and unscientific, but the APVA succeeded in making Jamestown a mecca and a document for Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, and traditionalist leadership not only in the Old Dominion, but in the United States as well.

⁷⁹M. A. DeWolfe Howe, Barrett Wendell and His Letters (Boston: Atlantic Monthly, 1924), pp. 196-197; for the demolition see General Meeting, December 4, 1906, MB/APVA, 1902-1907, VHS, and Mrs. Joseph R. Lamar, A History of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America: From 1891 to 1933 (Atlanta: Walter R. Brown Publishing Co., 1934), p. 21; for the church dedication see, May 14, 1906, MB/APVA, 1902-1907, VHS.

Patchwork Memories and Historic Preservation

Since the organizational network of the APVA included its branches, it worked on diverse projects ranging from the preservation of churches to jails. When each project was considered, however, preservationists evaluated the building's importance for its memories, associations, and object lessons for the present and future. Protestant churches such as St. Luke's near Smithfield, Christ Church in Lancaster County, and the ruins of Old Monmouth in Lexington received APVA assistance. These efforts not only represented the "holy work" which many preservationists professed, but also the close ties between many branch organizations and the church congregations.

Historic preservation on the Eastern Shore for the APVA involved the protection of a small group of colonial public buildings which were threatened with demolition. The APVA's drive received a boost when a local newspaper, voicing the Gospel of Preservation, warned: "Monuments of earlier times, like these on Eastville's court green, keep alive a proper veneration for the past, a veneration inseparable from and inspiring of patriotism. The spirit that would see 'old Eastville made a new Eastville' is abroad in the land in a larger way. The American people are urged to abandon old creeds and old philosophies, so that abruptly they may follow new gods." Critics of the preservationists charged, for instance, that the colonial debtor's prison was a "'relic of barbarism.'"⁸⁰ Traditionalists, on the other hand, remembered Mahone's debt repudiation and considered the building a symbol of the obligations of credit. In 1913 the county supervisors yielded to the preservationists and turned over the colonial

⁸⁰"Ancient Landmarks Preserved," The Eastville Times-Dispatch, n.d., clipping in PRM, 1913, APVA.

block to the APVA. However, the distractions caused by economic recession and the World War combined with the apparent mismanagement and arrogance of the branch directress stymied the drive to preserve the old square. An open rebellion broke out in the preservationists' ranks and ultimately led a number of community groups in the 1920s to petition the county supervisors to revoke the original grant to the APVA. Unfortunately for the APVA, the episode in Eastville was characterized by back-biting, a divided community, and much embarrassment.⁸¹

Powhatan's Chimney in Gloucester County also was acquired by a local branch of the APVA in 1912. Thomas Nelson Page, Sally Nelson Robins, and others at the time claimed that the chimney had been erected by John Smith for Chief Powhatan; on that evidence the preservationists later made pilgrimages to the site and eventually rebuilt the structure in the 1930s. Years later, however, a research study commissioned by the APVA concluded, much to the dismay of those preservationists, that the structure could not be attributed to Chief Powhatan.⁸²

The Cape Henry Lighthouse, a commanding structure built during the administration of George Washington, was donated by the federal government to the APVA. The Virginia preservationists were interested in the lighthouse not for its engineering or design, but for its location--where the waters of the Chesapeake and Atlantic meet. On the site in 1607 the first

⁸¹"Eastville Branch," YB, 1912-1913, p. 84; the divisiveness is described in Kate [Savage] to Mrs. Ellyson, July 6, 1917, and Mary Fitzhugh to Mrs. Ellyson, March 24, 1922, in Northampton Branch Correspondence, Box 3, APVA; July 6, 1923, MB/APVA, 1921-1923, VHS.

⁸²Thomas Nelson Page, "Old Yorktown," Scribner's Monthly 22 (October 1881):801-816; November 27, 1894, MB/APVA, 1894, VHS; Ludwell Lee Montague to the Directress, Joseph Bryan Branch, August 5, 1971, in Powhatan's Chimney Research, APVA.

English colonists landed, held a service of thanksgiving and reembarked for a settlement further inland. Since the lighthouse was "utterly abandoned" in 1894, Belle Bryan wrote the U.S. district engineer that it would "answer our intentions perfectly" for a memorial to the 1607 voyagers. Only in the mid-1920s did the Norfolk branch officially consider the restoration of the lighthouse by planning to ask Congress for a \$5,000 allocation.⁸³ The acquisition of the lighthouse, then, was tangential to the APVA's chosen mission of marking the route of the Jamestown settlers.

The first acquisition by the APVA in Richmond was the John Marshall house. Threatened with demolition in 1906 by the city school board, the APVA and its president Belle Bryan rallied the lawyers, the professionals, and the politicians of the city and state to preserve the venerable house. "The home of the great Marshall," according to Bryan, "appeals in a degree hardly less strong than the home of Mary Washington. Anywhere except in Virginia this house with its memories and traditions would be guarded with jealous care (for its age if nothing else), and if it is altered or destroyed we will be justly censure[d]."⁸⁴ The APVA's appeal to the public won impressive support from the legal, business, and governmental professions; the city council, against the protests of the school board, donated the building to the APVA in 1911.

⁸³Belle Bryan to E. Bergland, August 17, 1894, in Cape Henry Lighthouse files, Box 7, APVA; "Memo," n.d., Norfolk Branch Correspondence, Box 3, APVA. The deed to the lighthouse was finally consigned to the APVA in 1930; see "Mrs. Ellyson Emphasizes Year's Work of A.P.V.A.," Richmond News-Leader, January 3, 1931.

⁸⁴Belle Bryan quoted in "A.P.V.A. Holds General Meeting," The Richmond Times-Dispatch, June 13, 1906, in Washington Branch Record Book, 1898-1917, APVA.

Led by Advisory Board member Eppa Hunton Jr., the lawyers of the Old Dominion spearheaded the campaign to repair and endow the Marshall house. The participation of the legal profession reflected, in part, their deep reverence for John Marshall and the Constitution, but also a determination to establish a symbol with which they could regain prestige and a reputation for public service. During the Gilded Age the profession's reputation had been tarnished by lawyers who had shown more loyalty to business and capitalism than to any abstract principles of justice. The legal profession's fealty to John Marshall, as symbolized by its part in the preservation of his home, stood as a testament to its wish for a better image. A growing reverence for the national Constitution--in part a defense against the democratic radicalism of Populists and workers--concurrently helped the Virginia preservationists in their drive. With the Readjuster period branded in his memory, J. L. M. Curry had noted earlier the perilous tendency of "popular assemblages . . . to violate written constitutions [and] usurp authority."⁸⁵ The sanctification of Marshall and his shrine, the APVA hoped, would elevate public morality through traditionalist ways.

Consistent with their interpretation of the Gospel of Preservation, the APVA prized the Marshall House not for its stately architecture, but for the values and life style of the chief justice. Mary Stanard, Historian of the APVA, noted that "the house is characteristic of its creator--sturdy and square and dignified; impressive in its simple outlines and ample proportions, well-bred in its sufficient but chaste ornament." Marshall was

⁸⁵ The tarnished image of the legal profession is noted by Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, pp. 27n, 102; J. L. M. Curry, "Recent Tendencies in Free Political Institutions," January 15, 1901, Curry Papers I-13, LC. For the worship of the Constitution, also see Chapter VI.

worthy of modern emulation, she explained, for his love of rural ways, his frugality, and his devotion to family life. He was the preeminent example of the Virginia leader, the preservationist claimed: "If there had been an Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities in his time, I have not a doubt he would have been on its advisory board." In APVA hands the Marshall house became a shrine to conservatism and constitutionalism; pilgrims from near and far came to pay homage. The APVA also opened the house to other groups, but "only to proper people," for meetings and functions. The Junior Order, United American Mechanics, for example, rented the shrine for its annual board meeting in 1920. That organization, according to John Higham, was "the hardiest, most vigorous of the nativist fraternal orders" whose career "mirrored the history of popular xenophobia" and paranoia.⁸⁶ For the Junior Order, like the APVA, John Marshall stood as a prime specimen of one-hundred-percent Americanism.

Richmond's "Old Stone House," moreover, was added to the APVA fold in 1912, largely through the generosity of Granville Valentine. Ironically, the seventeenth-century house had been for sale in 1895 and the realtor, preferring the exclusion of "any northern parties," offered the house to the APVA at a reduced price. After reviewing the merits of the house, however, the preservationists resolved that they "did not wish to purchase [it] at any price." During the following years the house deteriorated to "a dirty and unkept tenement" and was scheduled for demolition in 1911. However, the Advisory Board then reversed the position taken

⁸⁶ Mary Stanard, John Marshall and His Home, Read before A.P.V.A. at Opening of the John Marshall House, March 27, 1913 (Richmond: Wm. Ellis Jones' Sons, 1913), pp. 25-26, 29; November 4, 1919 and February 3, 1920, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS; John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New York: Atheneum, 1978), pp. 173, 174.

earlier by the ladies and declared that the Old Stone House "has such historic and architectural value as to deserve preservation." According to local lore the building once had been a quarter house for the Byrd plantation and later George Washington's Richmond wartime headquarters. After these claims were proved false, the Old Stone House in 1921 became the independently-operated Poe Memorial Shrine as it abutted the former site of the building which housed the Southern Literary Messenger. While the building was transformed to overly romantic colonial appearances with a "charming little garden" and a "playing fountain," it became incongruously a museum of nineteenth-century memorabilia and a "repository for Poe relics."⁸⁷ Although the restoration was far-fetched and somewhat peculiar, the Old Stone House had nonetheless been protected from the wrecking ball.

During the Jamestown Tercentennial and the national tribute to Virginia's colonial forebears, the Fredericksburg branch acquired the Rising Sun Tavern as a monument to its revolutionary heritage. Although the tavern was in a "most dilapidated condition" its revolutionary associations could not be surpassed. The leading men of Virginia had once gathered there and the building, preservationists would claim, was invested with their courage, sagacity, and leadership. "There John Paul Jones talked with the leaders of the American Revolution. . . . There Washington, Mason, the Lees discussed the relations of the colonies to the mother country and determined on their future," the local directress reported. "There is not a house in this broad country where as many famous men gathered to determine the course

⁸⁷ J. Thompson Brown to Mrs. B[elle] Bryan, September 5, 1895, APVA Papers, VHS; Quarterly Meeting, October 1, 1895, MB/APVA, 1895, VHS; "The Edgar Allan Poe Shrine," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 31 (April 1923):168; Advisory Board meeting, December 9, 1911, MB/APVA, 1908-1914, VHS; Board Meeting, May 22, 1922, Fall Meeting, October 21, 1921, and Annual Meeting, January 4, 1922, in MB/APVA, 1921-1923, VHS.

of events."⁸⁸

Preservationists prized these memories and ties. According to their Gospel of Preservation, the Rising Sun Tavern, like the nearby Mary Washington home, symbolized the sacred trust inherent in historic preservation. While reflecting a patchwork of memories, the APVA accordingly established a network of shrines and museums to inform the public and win their loyalty. Voicing their duty and allegiance to Old Virginia, these preservationists expressed a dissatisfaction with many aspects of the modern day. They preserved the past to document their notions of old-time community, republican values, and forceful, wise leadership. As preservationists asked their contemporaries to study and learn from the ancients, the past became a prescription to remedy an uncertain future.

Historic Preservation: A Bridge Between
the Old and New South

The myth of the Old South arose in the late nineteenth century and rested in part upon the symbols and traditions embodied in the APVA's work. Since the gamut of APVA interest ended in 1861, the year when the clock stopped, its leaders became determined to right the image--shaped by abolitionists and northern partisans, they claimed--which an earlier southern way of life had cast in the nation. At the same time, however, Southerners of Henry Grady's stripe, although willing to ennoble the Old South, called for the creation of a New South. Hoping to attract all Virginians of wealth, prominence, and influence, preservationists subsequently claimed strong continuities between the Old and New Souths. While swearing fealty to the traditions and inspiration of the past, they generally pledged an

⁸⁸"Report of Fredericksburg Branch," YB, 1905-1908, pp. 49, 50.

allegiance, albeit on their own terms, to a New South characterized by industry, commerce, racial harmony, national reconciliation, and social controls to secure popular order.

The particular task of the APVA, therefore, appeared to be the blending of the Old and the New; respected traditions, role models, and styles of leadership were applied to the modern demands and priorities of the New South. It was a difficult undertaking. As preservationists and their allies worked to popularize their vision of the Old South, the leaders of southern society, while declaring their homage to the Washingtons and the Lees, were pulled by the lure of prosperity, profits, and higher standards of living. First-generation leaders of the APVA had originally countered this drift with even higher praise for the frugality, hard work, and republican virtues of the ancients. The next generation of leadership, however, preached the gospel more dispassionately as it had not experienced personally the bitter memories of its predecessors. With Virginia securely in conservative hands by the dawn of the twentieth century, the leaders of the Old Dominion fervently voiced the Gospel of Preservation, but appreciated it more for its sanction of traditionalist leadership than for any call for republican simplicity and moderation.

APVA leadership from the 1880s to the 1920s represented two generations of men and women. While the first had been hardened by the Civil War, dire poverty, and radical challenges, the second experienced the traditionalist renaissance, the era of progress, and a new nationalism. The first generation--such as J. L. M. Curry, Joseph Bryan, Belle Bryan, and Cynthia Coleman--were usually die-hard Confederates and thoroughly loyal to the Old South. The second generation--such as Samuel C. Mitchell and John S. Bryan--still pledged that deep loyalty to the past, but were

called publicly the leaders of progress in the New South. Through both of these generations, traditionalist women, holding the titular reigns of the APVA and charged with the protection of virtue and culture, were probably more conservative and true to the old ways. Strong continuities existed, therefore, between these generations of Virginians; any attempt to draw a sharp dichotomy would obfuscate the real bonds linking these preservationists. As Wilbur Cash noted some years ago, "So far from representing a deliberate break with the past, the turn to Progress clearly flowed straight out of that past and constituted in a real sense an emanation from the will to maintain the South in its essential integrity."⁸⁹

Generally the proponents of the New South accepted much of the Old South heritage but rejected slavery, secession, and the anti-bourgeois Cavalier ethic. What they accepted they idealized and praised with flowery rhetoric. Recent historians have been critical of their adulation of the past; C. Vann Woodward, for example, noted that the New South cloaked its "bitter mixture of recantation and heresy" in the Old South's "syrup of romanticism." The APVA leaders, on the other hand, made no apologies for the plantation system or the Confederacy; in fact the Lost Cause pervaded their historical interpretation and philosophy. As Virginians debated the ideas of Old South and New South, Paul C. Gaston explained, both models became "genuine social myths," that had a "controlling power over the way in which their believers perceived reality." The myth of the Old South, which the APVA promulgated in turn, fostered "an uncommonly pleasing conception" of the past and an "exaggerated regional pride" which acted

⁸⁹W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South, p. 183.

as a brake on the pace of modern change.⁹⁰ Like others who voiced the Old Virginia Mystique or myth of the Old South, preservationists held many notions about the past which were mythical, yet these myths had been fashioned partly to serve political and social purposes. Not only did these myths invest a pride and an identity in their bearers, but they sanctioned elite leadership, Anglo-Saxonism, and conservative ways for the Old Dominion as well. New South proponents accepted much of the Old South myth precisely for that reason.

The two generations of APVA Advisory Board leadership were best illustrated by Joseph Bryan and his son John Stewart Bryan. The elder Bryan considered himself "one of the 'regime ancien'" and saw a decline in the South stemming from its race for wealth and its apparent decline of community. Lamenting that the planter was no longer the focal point of the southern image, he nonetheless urged Virginians to "emulate their distinct civic, military and domestic virtues. . . . The older I get," he wrote, "the more I admire the old civilization that made patriots and heroes out of the white people, and civilized human beings out of the cannibals of Africa." John Stewart Bryan, who succeeded his father as Richmond's leading publisher and paternalistic reformer, likewise admired the Old South order and virtues. The younger Bryan, on the other hand, epitomized, according to one reporter, "in a striking way the successful transition between the

⁹⁰C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 158; see also his "The Southern Ethic in a Puritan World," American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 44; Paul C. Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 7, 6-7. Woodward called the Old South myth "a cult of archaism" and downplayed its political usage; see Origins of the New South, p. 154.

old South and new."⁹¹ If differences existed between the two Bryans, they concerned the Lost Cause and secession; the two were alike in their strong convictions that colonial and antebellum society offered worthy models for modern inspiration. The Bryans mirrored therefore the deep traditionalism of Richmond and a commitment to the Gospel of Preservation.

A principal tenet of the New South philosophy was national reconciliation and the reemergence of southern influence in the nation. The APVA played its part by stressing the colonial bonds and shared heritage of Virginia and New England. William Wirt Henry, chairman of the Advisory Board, also spoke out for unionism in 1893: "It remains for us now to cast out the spirit of sectionalism, that bitter fountain of our woes, and henceforth to unite to realize the sentiment of the poet--'One flag, one land, one heart, one hand, one nation evermore!'" The APVA was described likewise as possessing "a membership which knows no North, no South, no East, no West, but inviting all who venerate the early history of this country."⁹² While many preservationists did hold a deep resentment against the North, the Association's public posture stood for national union and intersectional harmony. If the nation acknowledged Virginia's priority in government and society, the preservationists hoped, then the Old Dominion perhaps could control its own identity, destiny, and social order within the federal union.

⁹¹ Joseph Bryan to his cousin, Parke Bagby, August 27, 1906, Bagby Papers 106, VHS; Joseph Bryan to Thomas Pinckney, May 22, 1897, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Henry Sydnor Harrison, "An Ideal Newspaperman," The American Magazine (July 1914):61, in John S. Bryan Scrapbook, 1903-1919, VHS. Historians have long debated the issue of continuity in leadership from Old to New South; see George Brown Tindall, "Bourbons" and "Progressives" in The Persistent Tradition in New South Politics.

⁹² "Oration of the Day," The Washington (D.C.) Evening News, September 18, 1893, in Henry Scrapbook, VHS; "A Bill," A.P.V.A. [YB], 1896, p. 79.

The growth of nationalism in the South paralleled the elevation of the cult of the Lost Cause to a sacral system. The Old Dominion was the center of the movement and its proponents dominated Richmond by the 1890s. According to Michael B. Chesson, "a passion for the Lost Cause became the vogue for [Richmond's] white residents, who divided their allegiance between a dead nation and a living one and convinced themselves that they were both loyal Americans and steadfast rebels as they worshiped at Confederate shrines. By the 1890s, tradition, sentimentality, racism, and the collective weight of the past had eclipsed the progressive vision and the decline was complete." A frequent orator at Lost Cause functions was J. L. M. Curry and he repeatedly declared that loyalty to the Confederacy was consistent with an allegiance to the federal union. Unlike the North with its immigrant population, he also contended that Southerners were "not hyphenated Americans . . . but Americans, pure and simple, without prefix or condition."⁹³ The Lost Cause movement actually was much more than romantic nostalgia; it was an effort to reestablish traditionalist ways and win northern support for southern notions of jurisprudence and racial order. The crux of the issue for Curry when he considered the South's constitutional allegiance was the readiness of the federal government to recognize Virginia's local sovereignty within the union. When he claimed that states' rights was the bulwark of freedom, it in fact was a lynchpin, like the Gospel of Preservation, for elite rule,

⁹³Michael B. Chesson, Richmond After the War, pp. 171-172; the Lost Cause was not necessarily counternationalistic. C. Vann Woodward, for example, noted that "Southern romanticism was highly contagious" as even "Yankeeedom took to its heart the Lost Cause"; see Origins of the New South, pp. 155-156; J. L. M. Curry, Address . . . before the Association of Confederate Veterans, July 1, 1896 (Richmond: B. F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1896), p. 1. The best analysis of the Lost Cause ideology is Rollin G. Osterweis, The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973).

Jim Crow, and a conservative social order.

Not all APVA leaders, however, were fervent lovers of the Lost Cause. Some preservationists, for example Page and Henry, were old-time Whigs who noted that present issues were more pressing than the Lost Cause. Even Cynthia Coleman, whom one Confederate commander called "unreconstructed" in her sympathies, regretted the "love for the Lost Cause" and considered it a distraction from the APVA. The preservation of Jamestown also became a thorny problem since the island had both colonial and Confederate ruins. Mary Galt faced the question as to whose flag should fly over its old fort. "As to the flags," she wrote, "that is a delicate matter. I have not the love & reverence for the Confederacy that many persons have . . . So anything like floating our beloved U.S. Flag above the Confed[erate] fort might make some few persons have heart aches."⁹⁴ She advised flying the American flag, but not above the Confederate fort. Her plight probably was typical as fresh memories of war conflicted with strong desires for reunion.

In its blend of Old and New South the APVA spoke about the present needs of the Old Dominion. Attacking the privatism of the era, preservationists called for the enlightened citizen to fulfill his duty to the commonwealth and help lift it from its poverty and ignorance. John Lesslie Hall, for example, reiterated that theme before an audience assembled at Jamestown:

Young man, Virginia needs your devoted service. She is calling you to the front. She points to her bottomless mines and to her hills of iron. She shows you rivers teeming with plenty, and

⁹⁴William H. Payne to Cynthia Coleman, February 21, 1891, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 58, CWM; Cynthia Coleman to Mrs. George W. Bagby, November 9, 1892, Bagby Papers, 78, VHS; Mary J. Galt to ?, fragment of a draft letter, n.d., Galt Papers III, CWM.

lands waiting for the furrow. She points you to schools half-taught, and to children crying for the bread of knowledge. Will you obey her call? Will you heed her earnest summons? . . . She needs intelligent and thoughtful citizens everywhere to raise the level of public intelligence and to give dignity to her citizenship. She needs men that have studied the history of her past, and have from that study drawn inspiration for the future.

Fearful that Virginia's poverty would lead some to despair or rebellion, Joseph Bryan likewise thought that the progress of the New South was a godsend. "It is a great blessing to our young men," he wrote, "that we have some occupation for them than the driving of mules and negroes which was about all that was left to most of our Virginia boys before the new period of industry." Even Mary Newton, APVA Historian, thought that "the smoke of engines and the glare of furnaces add[ed] picturesqueness to the scene" of Richmond. Industrialization was considered by preservationists, therefore, to be a boon, not a burden. Few of them ever regretted, however, that the progress and profits were the products of cheap and exploited labor, that community social services were lamentably inadequate, or that middle- and upper-class boosterism was slow in helping the really impoverished and desperate classes.⁹⁵

The APVA likewise was active as a commercial booster of Virginia. Quite early it realized that the preservation of the Old Dominion's history translated into not simply better and more productive citizens, but tourism and publicity as well. The preservation of Jamestown, preservationists claimed for instance, would benefit the entire region. Planning the 1907 Tercentennial, Mollie Lightfoot noted that the APVA

⁹⁵ John Lesslie Hall, "Introductory Address," May 13, 1891; Joseph Bryan to R. H. Nelson, October 17, 1902, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Mary Newton, "Report of Landmark Committee," YB, 1898-1899, pp. 25-26. For the inequalities in and failings of southern urban development, see David R. Goldfield, "The Urban South: A Regional Framework," The American Historical Review 86 (December 1981):1024-1025.

and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway were "certainly working along very much the same lines in promoting the interests of Jamestown, for we must increase the travel on the C&O, and it [preservation] is such constructive work . . . tending to develop the country through which the C&O passes." Surely Lyon G. Tyler knew that the promotion of Williamsburg's historic past would aid the college and spur the town's business interests. Tourism also became an important industry, especially with the expansion of the road system and automobile traffic following the World War. By the 1920s the editor of Richmond's Times-Dispatch "put it quite bluntly" that "it would be commercially wise and in no sense improper for Virginia to capitalize some of its historic assets." APVA leaders fully realized that fact as they lobbied for better roads, particularly in the Historic Triangle area. Commercial development and historic preservation, therefore, represented a coordinated plan for rebuilding the Old Dominion. By the 1920s, however, the female leadership of the APVA still considered the former a male sphere and the latter a feminine concern.⁹⁶

While APVA leaders consistently praised the progress associated with the New South, they nevertheless attempted to brake the speed of change and the deterioration of trusted traditions. Preservationists rebuffed any extreme Yankeeizing elements and labored to protect Virginia's unique identity. The APVA for example made occasional pilgrimages to Brandon, a plantation on the James; according to one reporter, it was "one of the few old estates left untouched by the wealth of the North, and it stands today, isolated, aloof, proud and beautiful." First-generation preservationists

⁹⁶Mollie Lightfoot to Mrs. George W. Bagby, July 15, 1907, Bagby Papers 72, VHS; "A Strange Neglect," March 3, 1926, The Richmond Times-Dispatch, in PRM, 1925-1926, APVA; "President's Report Submitted to Virginia Antiquities Group," The Richmond Times-Dispatch, January 9, 1927.

--most notably, Page, Curry, and Joseph Bryan--considered their work partly an indictment of modern excesses. Page warned Virginians, for example, that they must first establish their own greatness by preserving their past before joining the race for riches. He likewise worried that the New South "boomers" in their lust for luxury and wealth were "destroying the true spirit of our race." They were so sapped by this "decadence," he claimed, that they probably could not "have marched down the hill at Gettysburg" as did the previous generation. Joseph Bryan held similar doubts not only about the individual's character, but about the government's as well. Although a top railroad executive himself in the 1890s, he regretted in 1893 that the railroads actually ran the state government: "The condition of things in which we find ourselves is horrible to contemplate. Two or three RR officials practically dictating the policy & naming all the officers of the State."⁹⁷ Whether boomers or executives, the leadership sector of the New South, claimed Page and Bryan, needed to learn from the Gospel of Preservation.

Historic preservation in the New South was a particularly difficult undertaking as Virginians wanted both the acknowledgment of their historical greatness and the benefits of modern progress. Old neighborhoods in Richmond, Williamsburg, and elsewhere often appeared to be standing in the way of prosperity. Richmond's Mary Stanard observed, somewhat helplessly, in 1923 that "the modern Juggernaut, Business, is riding relentlessly up

⁹⁷"Excursion a Success," unidentified clipping in Nell Nottingham to Mrs. Lightfoot, November 9, 1922, in Northampton Branch Correspondence, Box 3, APVA; Thomas Nelson Page, Address . . . on the Necessity for a History of the South (Roanoke: Hammond's Printing Works for William Watts Camp, 1892), pp. 24-25; Joseph Bryan to J. P. Harrison, December 21, 1893, Bryan Letterbook, VHS. Bryan was past president of the Georgia-Pacific Railroad; his 1893 reference is to the railroad executives' choice of Thomas Martin for the U.S. Senate.

homelike Grace and Franklin Streets."⁹⁸ The boom in Williamsburg, Mary Galt warned, also presented dangers to its historic architecture: "I am afraid this boom around here will ruin the old town--the move to build--making the houses come so close together." The town fathers, for example, had needed revenues so urgently that they had sold many lots near the APVA's Powder Horn; new buildings, ranging from a Greek-design temple to a galvanized iron garage, contrasted strangely with the APVA's shrine.⁹⁹ While urban and commercial development raced forward therefore, preservationists lagged behind. What made matters worse, however, was the APVA's insistence that historic preservation was largely a feminine concern.

War and Peace

When the Great War erupted in 1914, leaders of the APVA were divided in their responses. Did their Gospel of Preservation and their reading of American history justify the support of Great Britain and Anglo-Saxonism, they asked, or the continuance of traditional American neutrality in European wars? Thomas Nelson Page, long active in the campaign for permanent legislation to outlaw war, soon condemned the war and concluded that civilization had failed. Arms manufacturers and militarists, he claimed, were to blame: "Brazen cupidity masqueraded in the market as patriotism,

⁹⁸Mary Stanard, Richmond, p. 218; see also Virginus Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1976), p. 286. The growth of the business sector forced the relocation of many residents; new home construction also endangered old neighborhoods. Ironically one demolition of an old "landmark" was undertaken by Charles Talbot whose wife had served as an APVA director in 1895; see Robert Beverley Munford, Jr., Richmond Homes And Memories (Richmond: Garrett And Massie, 1936), p. 199.

⁹⁹Mary J. Galt to Mrs. B[agby], July 17, 1895, Bagby Papers 78, VHS. The town fathers later built a school on the ruins of the Governor's Palace.

and denounced rancorously all who opposed themselves to its selfish designs."¹⁰⁰ The sentiment which would prevail, however, was that of John S. Bryan who declared in January 1915 that America was committed to Britain through "Our World War." Thereafter Bryan was active in the League to Enforce the Peace, an association of Anglophiles, according to David S. Patterson, which "desired multinational machinery to sanction American unilateralist intervention in Europe" to secure the peace.¹⁰¹

While America remained neutral and President Wilson downplayed the nation's strong friendship with England, the APVA nonetheless broadcast its own Anglo-Saxonism and Virginia's lasting debt to the British Isles. Philip Alexander Bruce, an Advisory Board member then in London, urged that the preservationists illustrate that bond by placing a prominent memorial at Blackwall, the site from which the John Smith expedition had sailed in 1606. Barton H. Myers, another board member and British Vice Consul in Norfolk, proposed even before Bruce such a symbolic gesture and thought that the tense period before war's outbreak was "the psychological moment for a fitting memorial at Blackwall."¹⁰² Yet the logistics for such a monument proved impossible and the APVA chose, much to the dismay of Bruce and Myers, to wait out the war.

Pro-Entente war work in Virginia, however, was more feasible as the

¹⁰⁰Thomas Nelson Page, "Has Civilization Failed?," 1914 address, Page Papers 20B-35, Duke; Page was nonetheless called by one biographer a jingoist, see Holman, "The Literary Career. . . ." Page ironically served as the American ambassador to Italy during the war.

¹⁰¹John S. Bryan, "Our World War," YMCA speech, January, 1915, in Bryan Scrapbook, 1903-1919, VHS, emphasis added; David S. Patterson, Toward a Warless World: The Travail of the American Peace Movement, 1887-1914 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 250.

¹⁰²Directory Board, February 1, 1916, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, and Board of Managers, April 7, 1914, MB/APVA, 1908-1914, VHS.

APVA in a number of instances ceremoniously showed its support. In 1915 Mrs. James Lyons, an APVA incorporator and vice president, together with the DAR and other patriotic groups presented a cannon to the mayor of Winchester to commemorate the Englishmen who brought weaponry across the sea for General Braddock's defense of the English colonies. The symbolism was quite clear; in the same year American merchants were reciprocating the deed by carrying arms to the British. In her address Lyons dashed any notion of neutrality and reminded the audience that it was "a Christian duty to go to war" and the American aim was "peace with honor." A month after America's entrance into the war, Advisory Board member Henry St. George Tucker told a New York assembly which had gathered in honor of Jamestown that "God himself was aligned with the side of democracy." Months later the Norfolk branch of the APVA staged a parade and laid a plaque to honor Lafayette. After praising the French for their aid in the American Revolution, Barton Myers drew a parallel for the assembled concourse "of the great service this country is at the present time rendering France in the war that is being waged against Germany to make the world safe for democracy." The APVA also passed resolutions supporting the war, its women busied themselves with relief work, and they reiterated that American participation in the war was a natural corollary of the American Revolution.¹⁰³

With war's end and the national debate over the Versailles Peace and its League of Nations, past and present were again linked by leading

¹⁰³"Mrs. James Lyons Presented Canon to Winchester," unidentified clipping, May 28, 1915, Elizabeth Lyons Scrapbook, VHS; "In Honor of Jamestown," unidentified clipping, May __, 1917, in PRM, 1917-1918, APVA; "Barton Myers Making Address, The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 26, 1917, in PRM, 1917-1918, APVA; November 6, 1917, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS.

preservationists. Although the APVA took no formal stand, support for the League was voiced by Page, Hall, and others as they cited Virginia's own history as an illustration. Speaking at the Tercentennial celebration of Jamestown's first legislative assembly, Page warned that the militarism of the Germans was like that of the Indians in 1620, duplicitous and dangerous. He also claimed that Woodrow Wilson had "saved the world . . . much as George Washington saved the cause of liberty." John Lesslie Hall, speaking before the same General Assembly, called the League of Nations "the one ark of safety for the world" and warned that international chaos or America's own militarism would be the consequences of our failure to join.¹⁰⁴ Worldwide commitments such as those voiced by Page and Hall were an obvious contrast to the warnings of J. L. M. Curry and Joseph Bryan in 1898 that America's internal needs precluded global adventurism.

Although the Senate rejected American entrance into the League, leaders of the APVA stressed continually that Anglo-Saxon unity was nonetheless necessary for world peace. The APVA welcome and joined, for example, the Sulgrave Institute, an organization for Anglo-American amity, when it held an elaborate celebration in Virginia in 1920. Representing the APVA, John S. Bryan and John Lesslie Hall again took the podium at Jamestown. In tones reminiscent of both Wilsonian idealism and the white man's burden, Bryan called the Anglo-Saxons the "exemplars of political . . . and religious liberty" who undertook "the great task of making wide the paths for the feet of mankind and making straight the way for the

¹⁰⁴Thomas Nelson Page, "Address . . ." in "Exercises and Addresses at the Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the First Law Making Body . . .," in Hall Papers, CWM; John Lesslie Hall, "The Meeting Place," in *ibid.*, Hall Papers, CWM.

progress of the work of God."¹⁰⁵ These calls for an Anglo-Saxon alliance and the notion of global destiny, in fact, were part of the same philosophy which had earlier led the APVA to endorse the World War and the proposed peace.

Continuities into the 1920s

During the 1920s the focus of southern progressivism narrowed until its principal themes, like those of the APVA, became the protection of moral standards and traditional culture. By this decade the APVA had become very fashionable, quite influential, and one of the state's chosen instruments in historical work. Legislation which was passed in 1922 had empowered the APVA, together with other select patriotic groups, to place markers across the state and to solicit funds with governmental sanction. At the same time the Virginia establishment congratulated the organization for its past accomplishments. A Richmond newspaper editorialized in 1925 that "but for the efforts and activities of the A.P.V.A., much of Virginia's history would be hidden in textbooks, many of her monuments and shrines would have crumbled and gone unmarked, and false history would be spread abroad in ever-increasing volume." After taking into consideration the work of the APVA, MVLA, and others, the editor of the News-Leader, perhaps Bryan himself, noted four years later that "comparatively little remains

¹⁰⁵"Acclaim Virginia as Real Cradle of the Republic," The Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 8, 1920, pp. 1-2; for Hall's address see "Anglo-Saxon Unity Stressed as Hope of Whole World," The Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 7, 1920, pp. 1-2; see also June 10, 1920, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS. The Sulgrave Institute also toured Massachusetts; the APVA considered its pilgrimage to Jamestown as the ideal opportunity to convince the British that Virginia had priority over New England.

to be done in saving the places that have given Virginia her greatest fame."¹⁰⁶ This editor's claim, of course, reflected his own discriminating interpretation of historical fame. Like that of the APVA, his notion of historical importance was defined narrowly and reflected his class and cultural interests.

Through the 1920s the APVA continued its earlier work. When rumors were floated that the federal government wanted Jamestown for its future Colonial National Park, the APVA claimed that only the state should be empowered to undertake such a project. It also reiterated its long-held stance that "under no circumstances would the association part with its property at Jamestown."¹⁰⁷ As custodian of such an important piece of the past, the APVA virtually equated its mission and influence with the retention of Jamestown. While opposing any challenges to their hold on Jamestown, the APVA ironically supported federal plans to acquire Yorktown's battlefield for a national park. At the same time the SPNEA's founder William Sumner Appleton thought that "it would be extremely bad policy" for the state to cede these lands to Washington. The New England preservationist likewise opposed any material changes in old Yorktown and feared that Virginians were threatening the symbols of the nation's revolutionary heritage in the rush to modernize. The Yorktown branch of the APVA also lobbied the federal government to set aside October 19th as a national holiday in commemoration of the 1781 victory. Even after

¹⁰⁶For the 1920s see Dewey Grantham, "The Contours of Southern Progressivism," p. 1054; "Saving Virginia's History," The Richmond Times-Dispatch, January 8, 1925, in PRM, 1924-1925, APVA; "Few Realize How Much Has Been Done in the Six Years," The Richmond News-Leader, February 18, 1929, in PRM, 1928-1929, APVA.

¹⁰⁷"Mrs. Ellyson Emphasizes Year's Work of A.P.V.A.," The Richmond News-Leader, January 3, 1931, in Newspaper Collection, APVA.

declaring that the day was more important than July 4th, the APVA's efforts were rebuffed by federal officials who thought that there was a "surfeit of holidays" which had "a detrimental effect on both the morals of the people and the progress or success of business generally."¹⁰⁸ When it came to defending the work ethic and business profits, the administration of Harding and Coolidge would brook few challenges.

The Williamsburg branch experienced the most activity and change in the 1920s and afterwards. Although once the seedbed of the APVA in 1888, it almost became a deathbed by the early 1930s as the Rockefeller-financed restoration took over the town. During the 1920s, however, both Tyler and Goodwin actively promoted various preservation activities, most of which involved the APVA in one way or another. Upon his return to Williamsburg in 1923, Goodwin resurrected his grand plans for a colonial-style restoration of the entire village and thereby implicitly rejected the slow, piecemeal approach of the APVA. Reiterating the Gospel of Preservation, the minister considered a restored Williamsburg to be a powerful source for moral inspiration. Williamsburg possessed, he claimed, "a spirit that stirs the memory and fires the imagination"; it would "illumine the judgment of those" it touched to preserve the past "and resist the spirit of ruthless innovation."¹⁰⁹

While never explicitly rebuffing the APVA, Goodwin realized that his ambitious dreams required more verve, talent, and money than they possessed.

¹⁰⁸Wm. Sumner Appleton to Fiske Kimball, June 12, 1924, and Appleton to Secretary, Yorktown Country Club, December 17, 1924, in Virginia file, SPNEA; Emma Chenoweth to S. O. Bland [M.C.], November 1, 1921, and his reply, November 26, 1921, in Yorktown Branch Minute Book, CWM.

¹⁰⁹Wm. A. R. Goodwin, Bruton Parish Restored and Its Historic Environment (Petersburg: Franklin Press, 1907), p. 33; see also, Hosmer, Preservation Comes of Age, pp. 11-12.

In 1924 he made his first bid for Rockefeller support; two years later he began his own preservation work with the acquisition of the George Wythe house. During the next few pivotal years he surely, yet secretly until 1928, represented the Rockefeller interests as he quietly purchased many town sites and worked to acquire the foundations of the colonial capitol from the APVA. Earlier in 1924 and 1925 the APVA had explored some possibilities for the building's reconstruction either as a memorial to the veterans of the World War or as an Episcopal preparatory school. The problem with these plans in the end was always a lack of capital. After gaining Rockefeller's ear and largess, however, Goodwin effected his master stroke and cajoled the APVA into relinquishing its cherished site upon the simple conditions that the APVA would receive recognition for its past work and that the House of Burgesses would be reerected within five years.¹¹⁰ Although few had realized it, an important juncture in historic preservation had occurred. While the premises of the Gospel of Preservation stood intact as the APVA and Goodwin both appreciated Williamsburg for its memories and object lessons, the means to implement that gospel had dramatically changed with the infusion of Rockefeller philanthropy.

Although the APVA had relinquished the capitol's foundations, it gained a noteworthy historic site from the Rockefeller organization later. In 1924 Lyon Tyler had persuaded Williamsburg's town fathers to grant the APVA an option on the 1701 jail. The APVA, however, proved unable to either purchase or restore the structure. When the Rockefeller

¹¹⁰ Goodwin appeared before the Advisory Board in November and the Central Committee in December, 1927; see also December 29, 1927, CCB/APVA Minutes, Box 1, CWM; and Murray McGuire to Mrs. J. T. Ellyson, November 1, 1927, in Yonge Papers 1299-7, UVA; and Hosmer, Preservation Comes of Age, pp. 22, 25, 28.

restorationists announced their wishes to acquire the site, the Association most willingly traded it for Smith's Fort plantation across the James in Surry County. Including twenty acres of land, the plantation also held the Rolfe cottage which had associations with the son of Pocahontas, Thomas Rolfe.¹¹¹

The APVA's role in Williamsburg was long identified with the Powder Horn and its plight was symbolic of the APVA's limited resources and perspectives. By 1925 the magazine was in such poor condition that John S. Bryan and his News-Leader, unbeknownst to Ellyson, undertook a public campaign reportedly to "purchase" and stabilize the structure. The APVA leader, upon hearing of Bryan's move, was "shocked" and "indignant" and claimed that she knew nothing of the building's condition.¹¹² Although the magazine was soon repaired, the episode illustrated the limitations of the APVA and its gospel. When a historic structure was purchased primarily for its memories and associations, the obligation to maintain the site sometimes became a secondary concern of the branch organization.

The overall quality of the APVA work throughout the years of this study is problematic. The task of the preservationists, according to their constitution, was "to acquire, restore and preserve the ancient historic grounds, buildings, monuments and tombs in the Commonwealth of Virginia." These ambitious aims, however, were virtually unattainable

¹¹¹See "APVA to Get and Restore Jail at Williamsburg," The Richmond News-Leader, June 25, 1924, in PRM, 1923-1924, APVA; "Seek Exchange of Cottage for Jail," The Richmond News-Leader, May 27, 1929, in PRM, 1928-1929, APVA; January 3, 1934, Report of Colonial Capital Branch, APVA, Box 2, CWM; Lora Ellyson, "The APVA," VHS.

¹¹²Mrs. Ellyson to Miss Coleman, November 28, 1925, CCB/APVA, Box 2, CWM.

since historic preservation was considered primarily to be a pedagogic and moralistic tool in the woman's sphere. The gentlemen of Virginia, moreover, never allowed their women to develop the abilities and freedom to thoroughly accomplish anything outside of this sphere. Virginia in the 1890s also lacked the capital, will, and interest to undertake more than a symbolic implementation of the Gospel of Preservation. To make matters more muddled, the APVA's definition of historic preservation was open to question. Was it a scientific preservation whereby a historical structure was considered an artifact and prized for its original materials, appearances, and aesthetics? Or was it a romantic and figurative preservation of memories, associations, and related abilities to inspire the present? A historic preservation movement nonetheless must be considered within its own context. Both the romantic and scientific viewpoints represent different means to implement the Gospel of Preservation.

When the SPNEA's William Sumner Appleton, a preservationist who insisted on a scientific regimen and a businesslike method in historic preservation, examined the APVA's work, he found it to be very lacking. In 1923 he wrote Fiske Kimball, noted author and professor of architecture, that he had heard "distressing news about Virginia's neglect of her ancient Court Houses" and graveyards. Assuming--incorrect as it was--that these sites were within the charge of the APVA, he concluded more correctly, that "the Virginia Society is putting most of its time into memorial markers." He asked: "Can't we stir it up to do some active preservation work on the concrete object itself rather than to mark the spot where it stood?" Appleton even wrote Ellyson and urged the APVA to lobby both for the preservation of the court houses and the inauguration of a state-wide architectural study of publicly owned buildings. While Appleton's suggestions

were astute, Ellyson replied that Virginia had not developed sufficient interest "towards the preservation of old buildings, which are considered unsightly & in the way of modern purpose."¹¹³

The crux of the problem for Appleton, therefore, was his misestimation of Virginia society. Although the APVA and SPNEA both used the preserved past to influence the present, historic preservation movements in Virginia and New England were fundamentally different in their background, purposes, and methods of operation. When evaluated by modern and scientific standards, many of which were pioneered by the SPNEA, the APVA falls short. Its use of the past was more symbolic than historical; its methods more ad hoc than planned; its restoration procedures more romantic than scientific; and its abilities more limited than broad.

The APVA's real mission, according to its reading of the Gospel of Preservation, was a moral and inspirational one and in that task it was highly successful. That mission also met the needs of the class and society which established the organization. The preserved past provided the upper classes with a bulwark to assert and uphold their power and leadership. The Virginia tradition of duty and its refutation of the privatism so characteristic of the Gilded Age motivated select professionals and elite leaders to regenerate the conservative tradition and order in a society recovering from recent radical challenges. The Old Virginia culture which the APVA helped to preserve and popularize became a hegemonic force in the Old Dominion. Although class-bound, ethnocentric, and hierarchical, it became a potent lever to mold and move the present. The

¹¹³Wm. Sumner Appleton to Fiske Kimball, April 16, 1923, APVA file, SPNEA; Appleton to Mrs. J. T. Ellyson, June 13, 1923, APVA file, SPNEA; Appleton to Kimball, June 27, 1923, Kimball file, SPNEA; Ellyson to Appleton, June 19, 1923, APVA file, SPNEA.

lower classes were expected to meet the mythical standards of hard work and perseverance of John Smith, the courage and loyalty of Pocahontas, the financial honesty of Thomas Nelson, and the respect for law and order of John Marshall.

Shocked by the black's emancipation during Reconstruction and the radical democracy of the Readjusters, Populists, and workers movements, preservationists and conservatives used the past as a vehicle to return the Old Dominion to traditionalist ways. The APVA's Gospel of Preservation was not merely a lofty ideal. It was a command, preservationists hoped, which would rally the upper orders to reform their own lives, to exercise their duties as leaders and marshals, and to preserve their past in order to stabilize the present. Pronounced on numerous lecterns, printed in their publications, and symbolized by their preservation work, the APVA's Gospel of Preservation translated into conservative hegemony over society.

CHAPTER III
THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA
ANTIQUITIES AND THE POLITICS OF HISTORY

Traditionalist Virginians, such as those who led the APVA, believed that history was the key to securing their future. Yet that past, as portrayed in contemporary text and verse, did not always meet the high esteem with which they held their ancestors. The history of the South, they claimed, had been written by hostile and unsympathetic New Englanders; their past accomplishments had been slighted or ignored while their blemishes and misfortunes had been magnified. As leaders of the APVA preached the Gospel of Preservation, they realized that their history had to be wrested from the northern interpretation so that a more positive version could be fashioned in accordance with their social and political needs. In that process, important aspects of their history were rewritten, mythicized, carefully edited, or packaged as moral inspiration and pedagogical tools to mold the present generations.

The APVA's Gospel of Preservation, therefore, interwove propaganda, polemics, and history. The Association's interpretation of Virginia's past, moreover, served the needs of the leading classes by sanctioning conservative, elitist, and WASP hegemony over the Old Dominion's society. As the preservationists interpreted and preserved the past symbols of Virginia's priority and leadership, they also documented the argument that local rule, states' rights, Anglo-Saxonism, and individualism were

the keystones of the national culture. Historic preservation then became a mainstay for the reemergence of southern ways in a reunited nation.

The Polemical Character of APVA History

Before the Gospel of Preservation could be effectively purveyed, APVA leaders claimed that southern history had to be purged of the biases wrought by Yankee partisanship. In the years since the Civil War, observed J. L. M. Curry, "the Southern States have shared the fate of all conquered peoples. The Conquerors write their history. Power in the ascendant not only makes laws, but controls public opinion." In his view the results were misrepresentations, distortions, and outright lies. As Joseph Bryan editorialized in his Richmond Times, "It appears that there is a certain accepted idea at the North that anything that garrots history when the South is the garrottee will pass, irrespective of truth and fact." An announced mission of the APVA, therefore, became the correction and revision of the historical record. "The results of its patriotic agitation," promised president Lora Ellyson, "must be to assist the progress of the truth of history at all points."¹ Truth, of course, was in the mind of the believer.

What galled Virginia traditionalists most particularly was the New England claim that Plymouth was the fountainhead of American liberty and identity. New England's patent success in popularizing this claim and negating the counterclaim of Virginia led Advisory Board member John Stewart

¹ J. L. M. Curry, Civil History of the Government of the Confederate States with Some Personal Reminiscences (Richmond: B. F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1901, p. 185 (hereafter cited as Civil History); [Joseph Bryan], "Sectional Morality," The Richmond Daily Times, November 19, 1889; "The President's Address," Yearbook of the A.P.V.A., 1920-1921, p. 9 (hereafter cited as YB).

Bryan to insist that "the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, by histories and by hymns, had "Stopped the mouth of Chesapeake Bay with Plymouth Rock.'" An important sermon in the Gospel of Preservation, moreover, had been preached for years by Virginia traditionalists: "that sermon stresses the importance, from the viewpoint of history and truth, of not permitting New England to spread abroad any longer the false doctrine of its priority--without sharp contradiction and convincing proof of its falsity from Virginia."²

Quite typical of this Virginia counteroffensive was Lyon G. Tyler's pamphlet Virginia First which he hoped would be adopted by schools and read by the general public. Although it was repeatedly cited by orators and editors in Virginia, it failed to offset the New England influence in the national school curricula. In frustration he wrote Lora Ellyson: "We have much to endure through our association with people who really constitute a distant nation. In one respect this wholesale snubbing of Jamestown may be a good thing. It may arouse our own people to a sense of the questionable accuracy of anything a Northern writer says. . . . This impudent defiance of the truth ought to arouse them, if nothing else."³

APVA leaders labored, therefore, to arouse Virginians and to stir them out of their complacency. Thomas Nelson Page, for example, accused Virginians of "'a grievous fault'" when they failed to record and defend

²John Stewart Bryan, Speech at Blackwall, 1928, in Bryan Family Papers, VHS; "Virginia's Priorities," Richmond Times-Dispatch, February 8, 1924, President's Report of Meetings, 1923-1924, APVA (hereafter cited as PRM).

³Lyon G. Tyler to Mrs. J. Taylor Ellyson, February 14, 1924, in PRM, 1923-1924, APVA; he claimed in this letter that the pamphlet failed to gain adoption because Harvard historian Albert B. "Hart turned to it the cold shoulder. Perhaps he did not want Virginia first."

their history. Not only was this "simply throwing away the title deeds to our birthright," but it also was leaving them defenseless since "the outer world is judge when it comes to standing at the Bar of History." What made matters worse, moreover, was the domination of historical publishing and scholarship by New England and New York. According to some of these tracts, colonial Virginia sprang from convict labor, economic adventurers, and a society torn between rich and poor. Speaking before an APVA pilgrimage at Jamestown, John Lesslie Hall advised the preservationists to "encourage those who are writing the true history of Virginia, and weed out of your libraries those nauseous volumes filled with lying abominations which, under the name of history, are teaching the youth of Virginia that they are sprung from convicts and felons rather than from the flower of the Anglo-Saxon race."⁴

The Old Dominion's public image in the nation suffered. Realizing that this detracted from Virginia's power and esteem in national circles, Hall partly faulted the histories and popular tracts devoted to the colonial period. Whereas those histories "represent the settlers of New England as all holy elders looking for a prayer-meeting," he told the Virginia General Assembly, on the other hand "the colonists of Virginia [are pictured] as fox-hunting squires, ready for a julep. The phrase, 'Pilgrim Fathers,' with its magic ring, its psychological fascination, has become standard; while we have tamely accepted from our fathers the colorless phrase, 'Virginia colonists.' This gives New England a great

⁴Thomas Nelson Page, "Address . . . in Celebration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Assembling of the First General Assembly of Virginia at Jamestown," August 15, 1919, MS., Page Papers 20B-36, Duke; John Lesslie Hall, "Introductory Address delivered . . . at the Jamestown Celebration, held May 13th, 1895," Hall Papers, CWM (hereafter cited as "Introductory Address . . . 1895").

advantage," he warned. "'A good name is better than great riches' is true in more senses than one."⁵

The world opinion about the South, claimed Page, was even worse. While it generally considered the modern-day South to be "'an ignorant, illiterate, cruel, semi-barbarous section of the American people, sunk in brutality and vice,'" the Southerners of an earlier day were depicted as a "'race of slavedrivers' who 'contributed nothing to the advancement of mankind' and who started a bloody war to protect their slave property." The Old Dominion's pride was particularly deflated, Philip Alexander Bruce further recounted, when friendly Britons would present Virginians with gifts such as "'Pilgrim Father souvenir spoons, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' or the last apotheosizing 'Life of Abraham Lincoln.'"⁶ APVA leaders repeatedly cited such instances as they prodded Virginians to take action.

Preservationists and traditionalists campaigned therefore to refashion public opinion; the content of schoolbooks became a focal point of that offensive. Barton H. Myers complained before one APVA meeting that "inaccuracies exist in the general history now used in the public schools of the state." J. L. M. Curry made the point even stronger when he claimed that "in prescribed courses of reading in civics and history [there] are

⁵ John Lesslie Hall, "The Meeting Place of the First Virginia Assembly," in "Exercises and Addresses at the Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the First Law Making Body on the Western Hemisphere which Convened at Jamestown, July 30, 1619" (hereafter cited as "The Meeting Place"), August 15, 1919, p. 10, Hall Papers, CWM.

⁶ Page quoted in Daniel Aaron, The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War in The Impact of the Civil War, ed. by Harold M. Hyman (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), p. 287; see also Thomas Nelson Page, Address . . . on the Necessity for a History of the South, June 22, 1892 (Roanoke: Hammond's Printing Works for William Watts Camp, 1892) (hereafter Address . . . History of the South); Philip Alexander Bruce to Editor of the News-Leader, proof copy, 1914, Blackwall Monument/Research Committee file, APVA.

books full of [the] grossest misstatements, teaching sectional opinions and latitudinous theories, while works which present opposite and sounder views are rigorously excluded." As a general rule in these textbooks, observed one historian, "New England is identified with the United States as a whole. . . . Its society and mode of life are ideal. New England is the measuring rod of all other cultures, including that of the American South." The South, moreover, was subjected to a "sustained criticism" for a supposed lack of religion, enterprise, and perseverance in its residents. While these schoolbooks taught that democracy was foreign to the South and leading families in that region were guilty of immorality, ostentation, and dissipation, their authors concluded that "the roots of American civilization are not Southern." Despite the obvious need, the South only slowly developed its own textbooks; until then these northern tracts were used, "often with offensive pages pinned together at the request of the teacher."⁷ Certainly the pride of Virginians and Southerners was stung by these schoolbooks; the educational mission of the Gospel of Preservation would be one corrective in the reform of the southern image.

Leading preservationists in the APVA took the pen or podium to preach the gospel, yet their efforts often suffered from the same affliction which troubled the entire South. Unlike the Boston Brahmins who had long cultivated the arts and letters, late nineteenth-century Virginia lacked such a tradition. "Perhaps the most striking characteristic of upper-class Southern society was its almost complete absence of intellectual interests," noted one study. "Leaders of the post-Reconstruction era were Confederate

⁷"A.P.V.A. to Place Monument at Blackwall," unidentified newspaper, n.d., in PRM, 1913-1914, APVA; Curry, Civil History, p. 188; Ruth M. Elson, Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), pp. 8, 173, 174-175.

heroes, primitive men whose strength lay in geniality and physical prowess rather than in mental attainments. The next generation of leaders grew up during the cultural famine of war and reconstruction." Philip Alexander Bruce, an Advisory Board member, lamented that same fact: "In the domain of historical writing, the Southern States have been almost as barren since the close of the great War as they were before that event."⁸ While the APVA's leadership contained some notable historians, antiquarians, and publicists, their work generally dealt more in literary romanticism rather than in the nascent scientific history. Since Virginia was on the defensive and suspicious of modern and northern trends, its writers practiced more partisanship than detached scholarship. After all, history was used to restore and uphold conservative and traditionalist society, not stir up and muddy the recently troubled waters.

As a frequent mouthpiece for the Association and one of its principal interpreters of history, Thomas Nelson Page perhaps offers many insights into these limitations. Although he repeatedly warned that the new history of the South "must be written in that contemplative and philosophical style . . . and not be written upon the theories of its author," his own work gainsaid that scholarly approach. The problem which Page faced resulted from his writing in two contrasting styles: the one for romantic novels; the other for history. In the process this Virginian became perhaps "the most popular novelist in the country at the turn of the century," yet his writing of history took on the romantic invention characteristic of the novelist. In his oratory and his prose Page turned

⁸ Francis Butler Simkins and Charles Pierce Roland, A History of the South. Fourth Edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 376; Philip Alexander Bruce, The Rise of the New South in The History of North America, ed. Guy Carleton Lee, vol. 17 (Philadelphia: G. Barrie, 1905), p. 418.

"pre-War Virginia into a flower-land" and "concocted a preposterous picture of the Old South that bordered closely on burlesque."⁹

While Page was partly trapped by the desire for fame, fortune, and influence, he also suffered from "a semi-messianic compulsion to justify the South to the nation." Because he had only a "limited" acquaintance with literature and scholarship and lacked "the critical acumen" of the historian, his works elevated legend, lore, and myth to the point where others, including fellow preservationists in the APVA, cited them as documented evidence. While many in the United States were advocating a new and scientific history, the tenor of the historical literature cited by APVA leaders often resembled that of Page. His florid prose and oratorical bombast revealed his philosophy "that the head should never dominate the heart." As a result, his work was often "provincial, partisan, and ill-informed." What he most feared was that the South was repudiating its past in its rush to modernize. Cocksure that history and the truth would "show that [the South] has been one of the great forces in the civilization of our race," Page determined from the start that Virginia's forebears were righteous, illustrious, and noble.¹⁰ Like others in the APVA, his mission became the task of illustrating, documenting, and popularizing that pre-conceived conclusion.

This calibre of literature and scholarship produced, according to

⁹Page, Address . . . , a History of the South, p. 17; Laurence J. Friedman, The White Savage: Racial Fantasies in the Postbellum South (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., A Spectrum Book, 1970), p. 62; Aaron, The Unwritten War, p. 287.

¹⁰Harriet R. Holman, "The Literary Career of Thomas Nelson Page, 1884-1910," Doctoral Dissertation, Duke University, 1947, pp. 56, 172; see also Jay B. Hubbell, The South in American Literature, 1607-1900 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1954), p. 802; Page, Address . . . History of the South, p. 26.

Lillian Smith, "stained-glass writing." As it "shuts out the glare of the turmoil in man's soul and his world," it succeeded in "seducing the feelings with its wondrous little patterns of words that block off insight carefully and graciously." During these trying days of the late nineteenth century, moreover, writers practiced self-censorship: "Rarely did one of them put other than his carefully self-censored thoughts on paper, sifting them through layers of taboos and proprieties and decorums. Little appeared in print that could not be read as an inspirational thought at family prayers."¹¹ Virginia traditionalists, consequently, were very careful in editing and polishing their historical records. Anything likely to cause harm or embarrassment to the reputation of the Old Dominion was excised from the record.

Motivated by this consuming need for respectability, influence, and progress, Virginians wrote their history as propaganda and polemics. The outburst of southern literary efforts in the late nineteenth century, as particularly seen in the fame of Page, stemmed from these social factors. Wilbur Cash explained: it "proceeded fundamentally from, and represented basically the patriotic response of the men of talent to, the absorbing need of the South to defend itself, to shore up its pride at home, and to justify itself in the eyes of the world." John Lesslie Hall, for example, recognized that concerted action was necessary to cast off the shadow thrown by New England over the South. Speaking before the Virginia General Assembly, he urged the officials to "take immediate steps to fill the press, [and] the libraries of the country with propaganda literature."¹²

¹¹Lillian Smith, Killers of the Dream (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1949), pp. 215, 216.

¹²W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 146; Hall, "The Meeting Place," p. 8.

The historical primacy, wise leadership, and social order of colonial and antebellum Virginia must be broadcast throughout the Union, these traditionalists believed, before contemporary southern concepts of race, state sovereignty, and conservatism would be accepted.

Page and others in the southern fold subsequently achieved "extraordinary power" in the nation. "What the Southern armies were unable to accomplish in their War for Independence," Rollin Osterweis explained, "Southern writers--yes, and many of their Northern colleagues--would create in the realm of the imagination. The triumph of the Southern Myth would owe much to its literary presentation" by writers such as Page. Northern schoolchildren, likewise, joined their teachers and parents in reading Page's works. Subsequently, "a story-book Dixie . . . replaced the unfriendly picture of the South which had been earlier implanted in the Northern mind by slavery and the bloody battles of the war."¹³ Yet the North also was afflicted by racism and many there found it easy to accept a romanticized picture of Dixie. Somewhat naturally, on the other hand, Northerners were reluctant to acknowledge Virginia's claim as the seedbed of the American nation. An acknowledgment of the Old Dominion's past priority and leadership could be used to support Southerners' demands for more influence in the present. While the North recognized the validity of the South's racial solution, it was yet unwilling to meet their cries for states' rights and economic autonomy.

The APVA promulgated its historical interpretations not only through its preserved architecture and sites, but through countless plaques,

¹³ Rollin G. Osterweis, The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973), pp. 29, 113; see also Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937), p. 235.

monuments, and other shrines. A plaque or monument has generally three purposes: to educate; to commemorate; and to inspire present generations. "Preservationists thus influence the image that the future will have of its past, and by inversion, of the image of what the future will be or ought to be."¹⁴ This point must be underscored within the context of the Gospel of Preservation. As APVA leaders worked to reestablish traditionalist, conservative society after the tumult associated with Civil War and Reconstruction, they found it necessary to document their argument that the antebellum society had been noble, peaceful, and efficient. Traditionalists' hegemony over the present and future, they believed, depended in part upon their control of the past.

Concerned that if it failed to act, "important links in our history will be broken never to be restored," the APVA constructed a chain of memorials to regenerate the past for the public memory. The preservationists more often marked sites than preserved actual buildings. As they interpreted the Gospel of Preservation, the Association's leaders considered the commemorative tablet as effective as the preservation of the actual object in evoking the memories and inspiration of the past. Indicative of that, the APVA established a Landmark Committee as a select, standing committee, but it had no committee on architectural preservation. At a time when many important buildings were threatened with demolition or

¹⁴Robin Winks, "Conservation in America: National Character as Revealed by Preservation," in The Future of the Past: Attitudes to Conservation, 1174-1974, ed. by Jane Fawcett (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1976), p. 144. Winks called plaques "a public historiography" as "they tell us of changing views of the intellectual values of the past"; this viewpoint, likewise, is a premise of this chapter. He noted furthermore that the protection of an actual historical object, rather than the erection of a tablet, fulfills this threefold task more effectively, as well as promoting the cause of historic preservation and an aesthetic environment.

alteration, the Association's associate president, Lora Ellyson, nonetheless considered their 'special work' for 1910 to be "the placing of tablets or other suitable markers."¹⁵ Again, a strong motivating force was their competition with New England; many Virginia traditionalists, for example, thought it was "humiliating" that their cities and squares, unlike those in the North, lacked monuments to their forebears. The APVA's subsequent concentration on the erection of monuments, however, led the SPNEA's William Sumner Appleton to note critically that the Virginians were "somewhat given to tablets and memorials" rather than the preservation of actual buildings.¹⁶

This goal of civic education likewise prompted the Association to offer a series of free public lectures which were held usually at the Hall of the House of Delegates; the site was a good indication of the semi-official stance of the APVA. Attended by other patriotic groups, leading professionals, and high officials, the lectures were delivered by men such as J. L. M. Curry, Joseph Bryan, William Wirt Henry, J. Alston Cabell, and Heath Dabney. Topics included studies of great Virginians (Dabney speaking on John Randolph or Henry defending John Smith, for example); or the colonial period (Bryan for instance covering the "Crucial Period" from 1610 to 1642); or even social history (such as Robert M.

¹⁵"Introduction," YB, 1896-1897, p. 3; "By-Laws," Article VI, Section 3: "The Landmark Committee shall take care to identify and suitably mark . . . all historic localities made famous in our Capital city and State from infancy to the ever memorable epoch of 1861," YB, 1898, p.20; "Report of the Associate President," YB, 1908-1910, p. 16.

¹⁶Charles W. Kent, The Preservation of the Past, An Address delivered before the A.P.V.A., March 14, 1901 (Richmond, Wm. Ellis Jones, 1901), p. 14; Appleton quoted in Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), p. 68.

Hughes's "Love Making In Ye Olden Times"). Rarely did these lectures approach scholarly history; their aim, generally, was to evangelize the gospel among the responsible, the elite, and the wealthy. For the APVA's long-held premise was that the better classes of the Old Dominion must appreciate their past in order to act accordingly in the present. Virginia's future was secure, they admitted, only if traditionalist society accepted the responsibilities and burdens inherited from the past.

A Fabric Woven of History, Myth, and Romanticism

As history became a weapon wielded in the ongoing battles with Yankees, radicals, and modernists, its study and preservation became a sacred mission for Virginia traditionalists. Yet the narrow vision and polemical usage which motivated that study flawed its perspective and interpretation. Preservationists in the Old Dominion selected certain themes--including Manifest Destiny, Anglo-Saxonism, individualism, elite leadership, Virginia's national prominence, and the Lost Cause--and then, sometimes unconsciously, other times deliberately, chose historical sites which provided an illustration. Since the past was used to buttress the present, Virginia traditionalists labored to assure that history not only met their standards of "truth," but their measure of utility as well.

With Jamestown as one of its prominent focal points, the Association concentrated much of its attention and effort on the colonial period. For Virginians this was of "special interest," noted Wesley F. Craven, for it marked "the heaviest emphasis any generation of Virginians, either before or since, has placed upon the colonial origins of that state." William Wirt Henry made that point emphatically in his inaugural

address as president of the fledgling American Historical Association in 1891: "Every effect is the resultant of antecedent forces, and our study of any people will not be complete until we learn the various causes which have united to produce the condition of the people we study. Such a tracing of antecedents is history in its largest sense."¹⁷ Other APVA leaders made the same point repeatedly in stressing Jamestown's importance. While attacking an America enamored by the present and its progress, Sara Pryor, a vice president and incorporator, likewise warned that the birthplace of the nation must be preserved. "'No vigour of youth, no maturity of manhood, will lead the nation to forget the spots where its infancy was cradled and defended."¹⁸

The APVA used history, whether that of Jamestown, Williamsburg, or elsewhere, as a model in two different senses. Not only did the lives of John Smith, George Washington, and others provide character traits worthy of modern emulation, they claimed, their calibre of leadership and style of life were indicative of others in their respective generations as well. The latter view held by preservationists was probably no different from that of many historians of this era who thought that the lives of great men were keys to an understanding of how society lived and culture operated. Yet the APVA's own particular interpretation was also a reflection of the contemporary tenor of Virginia society. As

¹⁷ Wesley Frank Craven, The Legend of the Founding Fathers (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 151; William Wirt Henry, "The Causes Which Produced the Virginia of the Revolutionary Period," MS., December 29, 1891, VHS (hereafter cited as "Virginia of the Revolutionary Period").

¹⁸ Mrs. R. A. Pryor, The Birth of the Nation, Jamestown, 1607 (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1907), p. 352. For the background of the struggle between traditionalists and modernists, see R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 5, 8.

Clifford Geertz explained, "culture patterns have an intrinsic double aspect: they give meaning, that is, objective conceptual form, to social and psychological reality both by shaping themselves to it and by shaping it to themselves."¹⁹ Phrased in a different context, their understanding of the Old Dominion's past helped the Virginia preservationists to place the present and its problems in a historical perspective, but at the same time, their interpretation was itself biased by their own perceptions of the contemporary scene.

This tendency was further aggravated as the southern mind demanded a concrete and specific characterization of its models. "Since the southern mind is reputed to be peculiarly resistant to pure abstraction and more receptive to the concrete and dramatic image," George B. Tindall conjectured, "it may be unusually susceptible to mythology." Social myths in general, he continued, "are simply mental pictures that portray the pattern of what a people think they are (or ought to be) or what somebody else thinks they are. They tend to develop abstract ideas in more or less concrete and dramatic terms." Myths therefore fuse "concept and emotion into an image."²⁰ As they become realities in people's lives, myths help to unify society, perpetuate its traditions, and identify its goals and values. Accepted myths therefore become the test for truth.

Important tools used to restore the pride and reputation of the Old

¹⁹ Clifford, Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 93.

²⁰ George B. Tindall, "Mythology: A New Frontier in Southern History," in The Ethnic Southerners (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), p. 23.

Dominion were romanticized history and myth. While the APVA did not originate this process, what it did was create a semiotic expression for it through its preserved buildings, memorialized sites, and historic shrines. It found a most willing and eager audience as well; the postbellum period's defeat and despair, especially when contrasted with the booming society in the North, led traditionalists to seek a history which would provide comfort and reassurance. As Wilbur Cash explained, "the effort to establish a history which should be more than a form of folk-boasting" was flatly ignored by these Southerners. The mythical, romantic past became in essence the backbone of the traditionalists' identity and the society which they led. Its function was "something closely akin to the function of religion"; that is, it provided a moral code, established an identity, and unified experience according to the contours of the myth.²¹ The effectiveness of social myths, however, ultimately depended upon their popularity; the APVA and fellow traditionalists therefore labored to propagandize their interpretations of Virginia's past.

The APVA's rendering of history, as a result, rested upon myth, tradition, and documented fact; the three were so interwoven that they sometimes became indiscernible. Tradition and legend, for example, became mainstays for the popularity of Virginia history. Charles Washington Coleman, a Williamsburg antiquarian, advised an APVA audience in 1891 that "all the pretty, picturesque stories" make "history authentic." His anti-intellectualism got the better of him, however, when he

²¹Cash, The Mind of the South, p. 144; Paul M. Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 8.

claimed that "all generous minds have a horror of what are commonly called 'facts.' They are the brute beasts of the intellectual domain." His spouse Cynthia underscored that idea when she occasionally wrote in her essays that if "it is a local tradition . . . none must gainsay it."²² The process of mythification usually resulted in a more personal style of historical rendition. Mary Stanard's story of Richmond, for example, was praised by one reader: "You have so humanized history, so interlaced & interwoven it with the present that Richmond now seems to me like a beautiful being."²³

The romanticism of the late nineteenth century was an important ingredient in this blend of legend and history. Perhaps nowhere was this sentimentalism stronger than in the South; it affected southern notions of home, women, honor, and the like. What it indicated during the Gilded Age in the nation as a whole was a pervasive dissatisfaction with traumatic changes wrought by industrial capitalism. "The insistent celebration of these [domestic and human] virtues of an earlier America revealed an awareness of and resistance to the forces that were transforming the nation."²⁴ While the nation gradually abandoned this romanticism during

²²Charles Washington Coleman, "The Picturesque and Traditional in the Story of a Colonial City," an address delivered under the auspices of the A.P.V.A., March 20, 1891, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 101, CWM; Cynthia B. T. Coleman, "The Annals of Williamsburg, Virginia," MS., Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 101, CWM.

²³Florence S. Peple to Mrs. Stanard, November 6, 1923, Hullihen-Stanard-Kline Collection 6394-1, UVA. As history is humanized and folklore distorted, Richard Dorson noted, what may result is "fakelore," or a falsification of "the raw data of folklore by invention, selection, fabrication, and similar refining processes." He warned, furthermore, to "beware of the adjectives 'charming' and 'delightful' when applied to folktales"; see his American Folklore (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 4.

²⁴Robert R. Roberts, "Popular Culture and Public Tastes," in The Gilded Age, ed. by H. Wayne Morgan, Revised and Enlarged Edition (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970), p. 288.

the last two decades of the century, the South, on the other hand, immersed itself in the sentimental and the nostalgic. The cult of the Lost Cause reflected that romanticism. According to Rollin G. Osterweis, its romanticism was a complex blend of "an atavistic cult of chivalry, a paradoxical concern for industrialization and urban growth, a distrust of free inquiry in education, inflexible religious orthodoxy, a firm resolve 'to keep the South a white man's country,' a sustained emphasis upon agrarianism and 'agrarian virtues,' and a fanatical devotion to the legend of the glamorized Lost Cause." Its sentimentalism "contained many tragic immaturities, neuroses, regressions and confusing contradictions." As it reached "acromegalic heights," it led to the widespread belief that the society and leadership of the past had reached human perfection.²⁵

Perhaps the most celebrated APVA leader who embodied this infectious sentimentalism was Thomas Nelson Page. His writings, in the opinion of Wilbur Cash, led "toward a sort of ecstatic, teary-eyed vision of the Old South as the Happy-Happy Land." This Virginian claimed that he owed his biggest debts of gratitude to George W. Bagby, spouse of the APVA's long-time corresponding secretary, and Sir Walter Scott, who thrilled him with accounts of Scotland's Lost Cause. While Page was perhaps the foremost romanticist and local colorist in the South, his brother-in law, Philip Alexander Bruce, surprisingly called his writings realistic. "That tendency to exaggerated sentiment and overwrought emotion which brought so much of the Southern imaginative writing of a

²⁵Osterweis, The Myth of the Lost Cause, p. 130; Cash, The Mind of the South, p. 129.

former period into discredit," he claimed, "is absent" from his pages.²⁶ Bruce's estimation of Page was flattering but hardly accurate. This pervasive romanticism was not confined to the literary efforts of Page, or Sara Pryor and Cynthia Coleman, but also included the sculpture of Edward Valentine and the paintings of William L. Sheppard, both of whom sat on the Advisory Board.

The sentimentalism of that era, therefore, colored the APVA's promulgation of the Gospel of Preservation. Its reading of Virginia's past reflected a defensive psyche vis à vis the North, a wounded and deflated pride, a social myth which interwove past and present, and a dogged determination to maintain conservative, traditionalist rule. As they worked, the preservationists popularized a tendentious version of Virginia's past, and its net effect was a success. The identity, reputation, and vision of the Old Dominion's leading classes had been restored. With the past safely in their hands, work on the future could begin.

Central Themes in the APVA's Interpretation of the Past

Whether announced from the podium or declared in print, the rendering of the past which was promoted by the APVA's spokesmen and leaders stressed some prominent themes, or grande idées, which had accounted for the greatness of the Old Dominion and the United States. While some of these leaders espoused idiosyncratic interpretations, and occasionally conflicting ones for that matter, the collective statements of the leadership formed a unified theory of the causation, reasoning,

²⁶Cash, The Mind of the South, p. 130; Hubbell, The South in American Literature, 1607-1900, p. 799; Bruce, The Rise of the New South, p. 416.

and order which they thought was inherent in the historical process. The central themes in the APVA's version of the past included: the notions of Manifest Destiny and providential intervention; Anglo-Saxonism; elite and responsible rule; individualism and power over one's destiny; Virginia as the seedbed of the nation; and the Lost Cause. The root of these themes, however, was the conviction that conservative, traditionalist order had been long ordained. The APVA's Gospel of Preservation, therefore, was premised upon its leaders' assertions of noblesse oblige and cultural hegemony.

As APVA spokesmen expounded upon history, a recurrent topic was their belief that God had ordained that Virginia, and more generally the United States, would be the carrier of his divine plan. The notion of Manifest Destiny was quite common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; its frequency in schoolbooks and primers, for example, proved its approbation by the nation's moralists.²⁷ William Wirt Henry, chairman of the APVA's Advisory Board, also proclaimed that the study of Virginia's history was a sacred undertaking: "Let us approach the task reverently, for in listening to the voice of history we well recognize the voice of God, and in studying the past aright, we must need discover the Divinity which shapes our ends." Thomas Nelson Page exclaimed, furthermore, that "God had set His stamp" at colonial Jamestown and that was proven by "the strange chances and changes of the Sixteenth Century

²⁷See Elson, Guardians of Tradition, pp. 60-62. Repeated references will be made in this chapter to the content mentioned in schoolbooks and primers. As Henry S. Commager advised, and this point should be underscored, "what children have learned in school . . . is an almost infallible guide to the moral system that adults approve, and when that approval persists for three generations, it attains almost constitutional dignity"; The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 38.

[leading] to the final and abiding settlement of the Continent by the Saxon Race with its Civilization." England's imperial conquest of Spain in the New World, moreover, had been the work of the divine hand since Spain was "a bigoted and mind-cramping ecclesiasticism."²⁸ As traditionalists strove to capture the past, therefore, no more powerful underpinning of their own influence could be imagined than that of divine providence.

It was also commonly asserted that America and its style of individual freedom was the hope of the world. As J. L. M. Curry explained, "Our country is the glory of the earth, the hope of the oppressed of all lands, the realization of the dignity of man as man, the fulfillment of the dreams of all who have built their hopes on human capabilities and human liberty, and nothing can surpass the duty to omit no exertion of transmitting, unimpaired, all these blessings and hopes to those who are to come after us." Americans had been taught for so long that their New World meant freedom and opportunity that it was bound to be a creed of the civil religion. These assertions of global inspiration or world destiny, trumpeted even by an anti-imperialist such as Curry, represented "the climax of the Protestant millennialist interpretation of the [biblical] prophecies."²⁹ Yet the highly touted abstractions such as liberty, dignity, and human capabilities were

²⁸William Wirt Henry, "Oration of the Day," The Washington (D.C.) Evening News, September 18, 1893, in William Wirt Henry Scrapbook, VHS; Thomas Nelson Page, Address at the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement of Jamestown, 1907 (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1919), pp. 11, 12 (hereafter cited as Address . . . Jamestown).

²⁹J. L. M. Curry, "What the South has Done for the South," address in Washington, D.C., Curry Papers I-10, LC; Ernest Lee Tuveson, Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 138.

usually ill-defined generalities. Their own meanings for America certainly were problematic as a pervasive racism created an inferior caste for blacks and Indians and a capitalistic wage system trapped much of the working class in poverty and despair.

Further dangers inherent in this American claim of global mission were national arrogance and unbridled ethnocentrism. "To assume that what is good for America is good for the world, that saving the United States is saving mankind, is to open up a large area of temptation," Ernest Tuveson explained. "Manifest Destiny, under the cloak of what was often a very sincere belief in the great beneficent calling of the United States of America, undoubtedly often concealed selfish and sordid motives. 'Americanization' of the world can easily become mercenary rather than messianic."³⁰

The providential hand in the development of America, APVA leaders would claim, was aptly shown by the material progress of the nation. The humble and pathetic beginnings at Jamestown illustrated the great contrast with their own day. This notion that progress, freedom, and virtue were improving according to the laws of history, moreover, was a common and unchallenged axiom in the schoolbooks of the day. Speaking before an APVA assemblage at Jamestown, Governor Claude Swanson professed

³⁰Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p. 132. Professor Woodrow Wilson struck that note of global mission in 1898 when he spoke upon an invitation from Richmond College and the APVA. During the Great Debate over empire he said, according to the Richmond Dispatch, that America was "'the power of light'" whereas Russia and Germany were "'the power of darkness.'" In this imperial competition "'if somebody is to have all the world, let it be us'" ; quoted in William DuBose Sheldon, Populism in the Old Dominion: Virginia Farm Politics, 1885-1900 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), p. 145n. Arthur S. Link, on the other hand, has questioned the accuracy of Wilson's quotation pertaining to world supremacy; see his letter in this author's possession, dated March 10, 1983.

that "our national story reads more like a romance than a history . . . , as if by magic the haunts of savages and wild beasts have been transformed into cities of splendor and magnificence."³¹ That contrast, Samuel H. Yonge noted, was striking, especially "in the mode of living, in the knowledge of the sciences and the liberal arts, and in the superseding of intolerance and blind superstition by freedom of conscience and enlightenment!"³² While feminists, blacks, workers, and others may have doubted the complete superseding of intolerance by enlightenment, the APVA leaders, nonetheless, believed that Jamestown documented that fact. In preserving the island the Association reified the nobility, perseverance, and unending work which effected that progress.

A second prominent subject in the APVA's consideration of history was the concept of Anglo-Saxonism and that race's guardianship of Christianity and culture. While Anglophobia may have been common among populists, admiration for Great Britain was rife in genteel circles and along the eastern seaboard. Schoolbooks noted, moreover, that "glorifying Britain in the present . . . would redound to American prestige." Most historians likewise considered America as an Anglo-Saxon domain and its history essentially "as the transmission of Protestant ideals and Anglo-Saxon culture."³³ Infected by this racialism, historians generally

³¹"Jamestown Day Last Monday," Virginia Gazette, May 18, 1907; C. Vann Woodward noted, on the other hand, that generations of poverty and scarcity have put a distinctive mark upon the southern people; see his "The Search for Southern Identity," in The Burden of Southern History, Revised Edition (New York: The New American Library, 1968), pp. 25-27.

³²Samuel H. Yonge, "The Site of Old 'James Towne,' 1607-1698," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography [VMHB] 11 (January 1904):262.

³³Elson, Guardians of Tradition, p. 120; William L. O'Neill, The Progressive Years: America Comes of Age (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975), p. 101.

looked askance at the new immigrants and wrote approvingly of the idea of Negro inferiority. Yet for some of the APVA's leaders ancestral pride also included the earlier Germans and Scotch-Irish. The Germanic forebears of Virginia, for example, were lauded by an APVA lecturer for "their wonderful thrift and energy," their skill as workers, and their devout family lives. William Wirt Henry similarly praised his own Scotch-Irish ancestors since "they were foremost in opposing tyranny in every form [and] their constant warfare with the Indians made them a race of warriors."³⁴ On the whole, however, Virginia's traditionalists were English in origin; the vibrant Anglo-Saxonism which they voiced actually illustrated a defensive and apprehensive psyche. As the United States became more polyglot in ancestry and other immigrants celebrated their own ethnicity and contributions to America, the English stock campaigned to preserve Anglo-Saxon cultural hegemony. As far as the APVA was concerned, Anglo-Saxons could form a common cause with Teutons, Celts, and others as long as white, conservative, Protestant society was not challenged.

The keystone in the APVA's structure of Anglo-Saxonism was Jamestown, a site which had "National and Racial" significance as well as Virginian. The Association's president declared that "the good Providence of God" had "reserved [it] to become the home of the Anglo-Saxon Race."³⁵

³⁴"A Fine Address by Gen. Roller," The Richmond Times, January 10, 1899; William Wirt Henry, "Virginia of the Revolutionary Period." It was a common implication that warfare with the Indians elevated American virtue and character; see Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

³⁵Page, Address . . . Jamestown, p. 27; "President's Report," YB, 1896, p. 24.

At the height of the New Immigration in 1907, Thomas Nelson Page claimed in fact that because of Jamestown "this Country belongs to the English Speaking Race, and the Civilization which it represents." Even after the James had eroded the most historic sections of the island, Page construed it to be a positive sign that the river "has borne that dust to all shores, and thus the work they performed has been borne on the tide of time to leaven and advance all the institutions of mankind." While other Anglo-Saxon shrines had been effaced by time and Progress, Sara Pryor promised that this "milestone" in the "onward march of the great Anglo-Saxon race . . . will ever be 'remembered.'"³⁶

Besides the notions of Manifest Destiny and Anglo-Saxonism, a third theme was elite leadership guided by noblesse oblige. The Association's leaders read from and into their history the fact that rule by propertied, responsible, and public-spirited men was necessary for the Old Dominion's peace and order. What was usually unmentioned was that this form of government historically had been a paternalistic oligarchy, where the elite and wealthy ruled with the support of other propertied elements over the whole of the Old Dominion. Most often, the APVA's writers and orators praised the FFV leaders of the earlier days. When contrasted with the present day, noted an APVA lecturer, such a comparison provoked "real grounds for disappointment" as "the standard set by our former statesmen is not always observed by our present day politicians." Joseph Bryan partly attributed this decline to the modern notion of equality. "We all know, and the signers [of the Declaration of Independence] knew it, that all men are not created equal," his

³⁶Page, Address . . . Jamestown, p. 3, emphasis added, p. 27; Pryor, The Birth of the Nation, Jamestown, 1607, pp. 351-352.

newspaper editorialized. "There are diversities of natural gifts, mental and moral and spiritual and there are certain advantages of birth, according to station and environment, which are 'self-evident.'"³⁷ Unlike the purity and simplicity which he attributed to the Founders, Bryan claimed that his own day, especially in the North, had "lowered standards of public life" and a "lowered moral tone." Universal suffrage, particularly in the North where the opportunities for corruption were rife, he claimed, had bred "such progeny as trusts controlling the necessities of life" and "the wholesale purchase of voters."³⁸ Disinterested, public-spirited leadership, it was commonly claimed, would redirect American society toward more traditional values.

A model for this calibre of leaders, the preservationists posited, was provided by colonial Virginia. John Smith, for example, had been guided by Providence's hand, Sara Pryor alleged, as he turned anarchy into order. "The turbulent, selfish, and ignoble were often in the majority of the Colony," she wrote in terms reminiscent of conservatives' attitudes toward Virginia's recent radicalism, "and nothing short of the interposition of Providence could have prevented their being in the ascendant as well. The miracle of its enduring life lies in the fact that a mere handful of men were enabled, through superhuman courage and patience, to overcome obstacles, the most tremendous that ever confronted a company of adventures." Later during the revolutionary period, "no nation was ever adorned at one time with so many illustrious men as was

³⁷Kent, The Preservation of the Past, p. 4; "The Declaration of Independence," The Richmond Times, July 4, 1902.

³⁸[Joseph Bryan], "Tendencies Unforseen by the Founders of the Republic," The Richmond Times, November 23, 1889.

Virginia," Claude Swanson told an APVA assembly. "Neither Greece nor Rome ever possessed at once such a prodigality of genius and eminence. It is almost impossible to conceive that a population so small could furnish so many distinguished men." Thomas Nelson Page claimed that Yorktown, his ancestral home, was "typical" for its public-spirited, liberty-loving leadership. Although "one or two families owned the place, ruling with a sway despotic in fact," they were "on the main temperate and just, for the lower orders were too dependent and inert to dream of thwarting the 'gentlefolk.'" For these few wealthy families "government was their passion and everything relating to it interested them."³⁹ In the minds of these preservationists, Virginia's past obviously illustrated that elite leaders and their noblesse oblige were the foundations of the Old Dominion's political structure.

Antebellum Virginia leaders and their families, these preservationists likewise declared, had not been descended from convicts, felons, or harlots, as was charged by some Mayflower Descendants and Yankee writers. There was "'not a single instance of a Virginia family descended from a convict,'" Mary Stanard countered, that "'has ever been found by any genealogist.'"⁴⁰ Lucy Parke Bagby, apparently the rare iconoclast in the Association, admitted on the other hand that Gloucester had been

³⁹Pryor, The Birth of the Nation, Jamestown, 1607, p. 157; Claude A. Swanson, Address . . . on 'Virginia Day' Delivered at the Jamestown Exposition, June 12, 1907 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 6 (hereafter cited as Address . . . Jamestown); Thomas Nelson Page, "Old Yorktown," Scribner's Monthly 22 (October 1881):806.

⁴⁰"Mrs. Stanard's Colonial Virginia," Richmond News-Leader, December 10, 1917, in Hullihen-Standard-Kline Collection, 6394-1, UVA. Since Stanard apparently undertook limited primary research, her claim probably reflects more filiopietistic loyalty than proven fact; one may wonder how many earnest genealogists would then admit such a record.

partly inhabited by convicts from English jails. Although these "jail-birds" eventually were "incorporated into the body politic," she had never met any of their descendants. "But sometimes the suspicion is irresistible," she joked, "that Mrs. A. or Mr. B is closer akin to 'Captain Jack' [a convict] than to the English gentleman, whose coat of arms they claim and prize so highly."⁴¹ Bagby's claim, nonetheless, was unique; most traditionalists looked to history to undergird their ancestral pride, personal importance, and sense of cultural mission.

While preservationists refuted the notion of convict ancestry, they differed as to whether the Old Dominion owed its greatness to the aristocratic Cavaliers or the lower gentry and middle class. After the War Between the States, most traditionalists upheld the legend of a Cavalier migration to the Old Dominion, for it was inspiring to think that their ancestors had been nobles and gentlemen. R. S. Thomas, an Advisory Board member, claimed at an APVA-sponsored lecture, for example, that these Cavaliers had been much maligned by New Englanders who denounced their supposedly frivolous society. While they had been bright, joyous, and gay, he noted, this image "had concealed the earnest, the resolute, the serious, and the daring" in their characters.⁴² The writings of Thomas Nelson Page added further support to the Cavalier legend, but his picture of a South divided between poor whites and sable aristocrats also added credence to the Yankee condemnations.

⁴¹Mrs. George W. Bagby, untitled piece on Gloucester, MS., n.d., Bagby Papers 23, VHS.

⁴²R. S. Thomas, "The Affairs in Virginia From 1642 to 1660, Showing the Relation that Virginia Bore to the Various Governments of England, Both Regal, and Parliamentary," Address, MS., APVA (hereafter cited as "The Affairs in Virginia"; misfiled under R. S. Smith).

Countering the notion that the Cavaliers were the true Virginians, other APVA leaders posited that the lower gentry, small planters, and middle class had been the backbone of the Old Dominion's society. Parke Bagby wrote, for example, that the "numbers and influence" of these Cavaliers "have been magnified and [they] are not to be considered as scarcely an element in the colonization of the Old Dominion." Mary Stanard, then Historian of the APVA, "'emphatically asserted'" in her Colonial Virginia "'that neither during the colonial nor the state period was the population of Virginia made up mainly of large land owners and 'poor whites.' The great majority of our people have always been the respectable, independent middle class.'" Thomas Nelson Page, on the other hand, admitted that his Hanover County had had these "half-strainers," or middle-class whites, yet "they had the vices and virtues of a middle class the world over; they were arrogant to their inferiors, obsequious or rude to their superiors, brave, ignorant, narrow, honest and mean."⁴³

By acknowledging the work of an earlier "middle class," APVA leaders illustrated both their own contemporary perspectives and the recent work of other historians. Since colonial Virginia had lacked a structured capitalist economy, the term "middle class" is itself problematic. What some preservationists actually wanted was to picture their ancestors much like themselves; Mary Stanard, a middle-class Virginian, therefore considered them in the likeness of herself. Thomas Nelson Page, on the other hand, was wealthy in status and aristocratic in ancestry;

⁴³ Mrs. George W. Bagby, untitled piece on Gloucester, MS., n.d., Bagby Papers 23, VHS; "Mrs. Stanard's Colonial Virginia," Richmond News-Leader in HULLIHEN-STANARD-KLINE Collection, 6394-1, UVA; Thomas Nelson Page, "In Virginia Long Ago," The Richmond Times [1893], in Elizabeth Lyons Scrapbook 1, VHS.

he consequently stressed the high standing and pure blood of Virginia's forebears. Obviously there was no agreement between Stanard and Page, except to say that they both considered their ancestors to have been propertied, respectable, and public-minded.

At the same time, historians were challenging the Cavalier origins of Virginia. John Fiske, for one, claimed that the middle class had been the founder of both New England and Virginia. Later William E. Dodd contended that the true South had not been an aristocracy of Cavaliers, but a Jeffersonian democracy which "had been subverted by the increasingly aristocratic and hierarchical South of the great slaveholders."⁴⁴ As the Stanard interpretation superseded that of Page, it indicated that the more modern view of America as a middle-class nation was gaining influence in shaping the interpretation of the colonial past.

A fourth thread in the fabric of the APVA's historical interpretation was the importance and power of the individual and his character. At a time when some theorists were accenting the deterministic influence of economy or environment in setting the course of history, the preservationists rejoined that the personal strength of heroes, such as Smith, Washington, or Lee, was a more important factor. Moreover, these heroes had not been motivated by economic gain or self-interest, as was implied by Beardian-influenced historians, but by altruism and idealism. As J. L. M. Curry explained:

I do not belong to that school of determinists which makes of individual and collective life mere mechanism or bland fatality. Human history is the evolution, largely and mainly, of moral causes, of virtues and vices of men, of ideas and volitions, of

⁴⁴David M. Potter, "The Enigma of the South," in The South and the Sectional Conflict (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), p. 5.

conscience and reason. Our social and political progress, our true and noblest civilization must come from the recognition of the sacredness and nobility of man, and "of his equal right to be unhindered by men in the fulfillment of his duty to God."⁴⁵

Theories such as economic or materialistic determinism found no place in the APVA's interpretation. As the preservationists read the Gospel of Preservation, they deemed it necessary to provide moral inspiration and figures for emulation. They looked for heroes, not scoundrels, in the Old Dominion's past. "Sons and daughters of the South," Daniel Aaron explained, "were generally more comfortable in the role of hierophants than subverters of Southern traditionalism. This attitude prevailed until the emergence of a new literary generation during or immediately after World War I."⁴⁶

This moralistic use of history was common in that era. In her study of the philosophy of schoolbooks and education Ruth M. Elson described the "cardinal educational canon of the nineteenth century": "To present to the child 'striking instances of virtue, enterprise, courage, generosity, patriotism, and by a natural principle of emulation, incite us to copy much noble examples.'" Historians who wrote for moralistic purposes, consequently, were more often concerned with depicting ideal behavior than laying out balanced research. APVA leaders stressed moreover that the present generation owed a debt of gratitude and an act of homage to its forebears. Unlike the self-serving citizen of her own day, Sara Pryor claimed, the colonists had "put their hands to the plough and never

⁴⁵ J. L. M. Curry, "North American Colonization, With Particular Reference to Virginia and the Carolinas," 1896 Address, p. 11, Curry Papers I-12, LC; Curry's views were clearly part of the old guard of historians; see Commager, The American Mind, pp. 289-290.

⁴⁶ Aaron, The Unwritten War, p. 282.

looked back" and had "devoted their lives, with no hope of reward." Later generations in turn "reaped the rich harvest" that they had sowed.⁴⁷

Most traditionalists actually feared a moral decline in the modern citizen and a weakening of his individualism. They subsequently praised the type of character formed by the environment of the colonial era. William Wirt Henry alleged, for example, that the seventeenth-century frontier had "stimulated" the colonists' "courage and self-reliance, while they learned the lesson of individual freedom." Since "the Bible taught them that every man was responsible for his conduct to his maker," they had cherished their individual freedom and rights.⁴⁸ The line of reasoning followed by these preservationists obviously revealed a troubling paradox. Although they continually highlighted the importance of an individual's character, they acknowledged that the demanding environment of colonial Virginia had forged sturdy and honorable traits. The hostile environment of the late nineteenth century, they feared on the other hand, presented ominous challenges. While many of society's leaders had been sapped by gilded and self-absorbing ways, the lower orders were in ferment. Preservationists nonetheless hoped that a moral reformation of the individual could ameliorate the foreboding trends in the new environment of industrial capitalism.

⁴⁷Elson, Guardians of Tradition, p. 186; Pryor, The Birth of the Nation, Jamestown, 1607, pp. 334-335.

⁴⁸"Oration of the Day," The Washington (D.C.) Evening News, September 18, 1893, in William Wirt Henry Scrapbook, VHS. While this notion that the frontier instilled a respect for individual freedom was quite popular, it again was more myth than fact. Thomas P. Abernethy noted in his study of the Virginia frontier that the frontiersman "cared little for principles or for the rights of the individual"; see his Three Virginia Frontiers (University: Louisiana State University Press, 1940), p. 24.

A fifth topic often used as a focal point for the APVA's interpretation was Virginia's primacy in American freedom and republican government. A few years after the APVA's organization, Frederick Jackson Turner conjectured that the American character and liberties stemmed not from the Susan Constant and Jamestown, or for that matter the Mayflower and Plymouth, but from the frontier and forest. Virginia traditionalists subsequently confronted another challenge to their claims that Jamestown had been the fountainhead of America. In a rejoinder they trumpeted the fact that Virginia had been first in government, education, religion, and other keystones of Americanism. In the ensuing years historians would debate whether the frontier or the seaboard was the root of the American character. The APVA clearly had made its own case.

Nationalism and Virginia's moderating influence in the union were a sixth subject in the APVA's interpretations of the past. Leaders of the APVA felt that the Old Dominion had unduly suffered during the past generations for its unique concept of nation. Samuel Chiles Mitchell, a historian and APVA advisor, for example, claimed that their "political isolation and impotence" were "no longer endurable." Declaring that "the South has to-day reverted to its primal National spirit," he worked to reconcile the North and South. While many preservationists such as Lyon G. Tyler still believed that after the Civil War, as before, "the laws of the federal government . . . have favored the North and injured the South," they worked to reverse that imbalance by propagating southern ways in the nation.⁴⁹ Perhaps the most effective APVA leader pursuing this approach

⁴⁹Samuel C. Mitchell, "The South and the School," 1906 Address, MS., Mitchell Papers 9, LC; "Virginia First State to Denounce Slavery," unidentified newspaper, n.d., in PRM, 1923-1924, APVA.

was Thomas Nelson Page. Continually stressing unionism and nationalism, his works were so popular and moving that even Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a former militant abolitionist and commander of a Negro troop regiment during the Civil War, read his Marse Chan and wept over the death of a slave owner!⁵⁰

Since the APVA leaders had emphatically determined to maintain the honor of the Old South, a point of debate in the issue of nationalism was the sharp contrast between a legalistic and an organic bond. The southern view, as expressed by one of its most articulate exponents, J. L. M. Curry, was the legalistic or contractual theory of nationalism, whereby the states had made the union through a social contract. Advocating this states' rights school of politics, Curry claimed that "those doctrines contain the only principles or policy truly conservative of the Constitution." Claiming that the South had been true to the Constitution and the Union, he charged that "the real enemies, the true disunionists, have been those who, under the guise of a deceptive name, have perverted the name and true functions of the government."⁵¹

Curry's stance in behalf of states' rights, strict construction, and a legalistic sense of nationalism, however, represented a viewpoint which was waning at a time when the organic theory was on the rise. According to the organic theorists, the nation was a homogenous, unified land, and not a mere contractual relationship between states. Unlike southern traditionalists who saw the family, community, and state as inviolable elements in a nation, organic theorists claimed that "only through the nation can

⁵⁰Virginius Dabney, Virginia: The New Dominion (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1971), p. 404.

⁵¹Curry, Civil History, pp. 242-243.

the individual realize his own moral freedom." Again in stark contrast with the states' rights position, "subscribers to the organic theory agreed in holding that the nation is older than the states--is, in fact, their creator. Only in the nation do the states have their being. . . . Sovereignty is indivisible and can therefore hardly be shared by the states. It proceeds, not from the Constitution, but . . . from the whole complex of social, economic, and ethnic facts that have shaped the national spirit."⁵² Such a view of nationalism clearly ran counter to the traditionalist mind in Virginia. While Page, Curry, and other APVA leaders pledged a sincere loyalty to the Union, it was to a nation based on a contract, a states' rights philosophy, and the expectation that the nation would acknowledge the South's right to control her own internal affairs.

Defense of the Lost Cause, the seventh theme, was a central point in the APVA's reading of history. Since many of the prominent preservationists had been molded by the war and reconstruction, their attitudes and understanding of the past were subsequently impressed by the Confederate years. To one degree or another, almost all of the APVA leaders vindicated the Lost Cause. After all, the principal ingredients of the Lost Cause resembled those promulgated by the APVA as it read the gospel: white rule, local government, strict constructionism, traditionalist leadership, and a conservative philosophy. Surely the changes inherent in the new unionism, industrial capitalism, and urban society had affected the meaning of the South's Lost Cause, but, as traditionalists reviewed their past, they believed that they had been long struggling

⁵²Merle E. Curti, The Roots of American Loyalty (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), pp. 177, 178.

against misgovernment, northern domination, and centralized rule. The APVA's reading of history, therefore, not only salved the recent wounds of war and reinflated a damaged pride, it also substantiated the claims of Confederates that their goals had been noble, sound, and historic.

In the estimation of many APVA leaders the roots of the Lost Cause could be traced to the seventeenth century. As Thomas Nelson Page explained, "'the Rebellion' led by Nathaniel Bacon in 1676, was at bottom for the same cause with that which a hundred years later was led by George Washington. . . . The basic cause was the same in both. The inalienable right of British subjects to have self-government. Both of them were based on the original Charter under which Virginia was planted." The patriot Bacon had inspired Patrick Henry, a hero of states' rights who, according to William R. Taylor, "came to symbolize honorable failure and the lost cause." The Civil War culminated this struggle and as Edward V. Valentine claimed: "If the principles for which these [Confederate] patriots fought were wrong then the landing at Jamestown was a misfortune--Nathaniel Bacon was a rebel indeed--Patrick Henry spoke his eloquence in vain."⁵³

For the APVA, the events associated with colonial Jamestown and Williamsburg, and the Civil War presented a logical historical continuity for the Lost Cause. Since a Confederate fort, a "relic of the 'Lost Cause,'" was located at Jamestown, the preservationists declared that it was "most fitting that an era which was so momentous to Virginia and to

⁵³Page, Address . . . Jamestown, p. 24; William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1961), p. 159; Edward V. Valentine, "At the Opening of the New Building at the University College of Medicine," November 24, 1897, Address, VM.

the whole country, should have such a memorial at the birthplace of the nation." The APVA's Richmond headquarters, moreover, was the wartime home of Robert E. Lee; Lora Ellyson acknowledged that "it would be strange, if whilst transacting our business within walls of a building once the home of our greatest general, if we had not drawn some inspiration for our work."⁵⁴ "Some inspiration" indeed was an understatement; the APVA drew a sizable segment of its philosophy and raison d'être from Lee's own Lost Cause.

The driving force behind the southern Lost Cause was Virginia, and many APVA leaders, such as Page, Curry, Bryan, and Pryor, were at the forefront. Influenced not only by "moods of bitterness, defeat, and a desire for justification that affected other southerners in their time," Thomas Connelly explained, these "Virginians wrote under the added burden of an alchemy of lost status, injured pride, and guilt. They were obsessed with being first." As they wrote Virginia's history, they blended colonial and Confederate themes so that the separate historical pictures became blurred. Describing the work of Thomas Nelson Page, Edmund Wilson noted, "not only is Virginia before the war made to fuse with the colonial Virginia . . . [but] both hang in the past as a glamorous legend."⁵⁵

The principal themes of the APVA's reading of history, therefore,

⁵⁴"Notes on a Journey to Jamestown" (Richmond: APVA, n.d.), [c. 1901], in Newspaper Collection, APVA; "Address of Mrs. J. Taylor Ellyson," YB, 1911-1912, p. 10.

⁵⁵Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 45; Edmund Wilson, Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, A Galaxy Book, 1962), p. 613.

formed the criteria used in its decisions as to what was worthy of preservation and memorialization. Those buildings, sites, and artifacts which symbolized the Lost Cause, states' rights, Virginia conservatism, strong individualism, national priority, elite rule, Anglo-Saxonism, and Manifest Destiny were deemed important in the historical legacy of the Old Dominion. What these themes represented were two interrelated goals: the perpetuation of traditionalism in Virginia and the extension of southern culture and influence in the reunited nation. The APVA keenly realized that these goals could only be accomplished if the history of Virginia offered inspiration, excitation, and models for emulation. "One of the pressing needs, as we deem it, of our county and our time," Thomas Nelson Page exclaimed, was "the need of a history of the South and of the Southern people."⁵⁶ The preserved shrines of the APVA, however, only served part of that purpose. While academic and popular historians revised the interpretation of southern history, the APVA buttressed that process by erecting tablets, monuments, and memorials to stir the memories of the Virginia populace. Fearful that some Virginians would abandon the historical legacy and unique character of their state, the preservationists labored to visualize through buildings and shrines their Gospel of Preservation.

The APVA Interprets the Past:
The Colonial Period

What buildings the APVA chose to preserve were dependent upon general availability, market forces, and expendable revenues. What sites and events it memorialized, on the other hand, were simply reflections of

⁵⁶Page, Address . . . History of the South, p. 2.

the interest and opinions of its leadership. A study of these monuments and memorials, and how they were interpreted, will therefore constitute a look at public historiography and reveal a more thorough understanding of the preservationists' reading of history. The gamut of their interest, as stipulated in the APVA charter, ran from 1607 to 1861. Within those two and one-half centuries they found the well-springs of Virginia's tradition, identity, and order. It was the same period, moreover, when conservative, elite, WASP rule had been established in the Old Dominion.

While the APVA's branches were semi-autonomous in authority and partial to their local biases, the Association as a whole especially focused upon the colonial period of Virginia. At the time and as a fallout from the centennial celebrations, the revolutionary period had been foremost in the public mind. Yet, the earlier period was more deserving, claimed one APVA orator, since during the Jamestown years "the seed of an empire was being sown . . . [and] every man's life was in his own hands."⁵⁷ The keystone of the early colonial period's history, therefore, became Jamestown. While its settlers were lauded, preservationists differed as to the motivation which brought them to the New World.

Some APVA speakers admitted that Jamestown had been founded in pursuit of wealth and material gain. "Virginia was the Klondike of that period," Randolph H. McKim informed one APVA audience. Thomas Nelson Page declared in the 1890s as well that "the Southern colonies . . . were from the first the product simply of a desire for adventure, for conquest, and for wealth."⁵⁸ In a late nineteenth-century South struggling for progress

⁵⁷Thomas, "The Affairs in Virginia."

⁵⁸"Virginia Homes and History," The Richmond Evening Leader, January 13, 1900; Thomas Nelson Page, "The Old South," in The Old South: Essays Social and Political (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p. 7.

it probably seemed reasonable to expect one's ancestors to have acted similarly.

Speaking many years later as a principal orator for the Jamestown Tercentennial, Page however reversed that tack. "It has been charged by those ignorant of the facts or incapable of comprehending them," he exclaimed, "that Virginia was planted only for gain. The fact is far otherwise. The planting of Virginia had its origins in the religious zeal of the people of England." In an obvious refutation of northern claims that Virginia lacked true religious roots, Page continued that "no Puritans were ever more zealous than those Church of England colonists of Virginia . . . and from that day to this the people of Virginia have been among the most religious people in the world." The Jamestown settlers, he trumpeted, were "faithful Soldiers of Christ, who came in the true missionary spirit" and labored to establish a "great Protestant State."⁵⁹ APVA leaders would subsequently claim that the first settlers had been fired by religion and high moral purposes, but the wealth of the land had diverted some along a different road.⁶⁰

Commemorating each step of the Jamestown voyagers of 1606-1607, the APVA marked the English embarkation site at Blackwall, the site of their first landing at Cape Henry, the first settlement at Jamestown, and a

⁵⁹Page, Address . . . Jamestown, pp. 14, 15, 16; similar sentiments were expressed by Cynthia B. T. Coleman, Jamestown, MS., n.d., Coleman-Tucker Papers 102, CWM. The volte-face finessed by Page is difficult to explain; most probably he wanted to impart a more moralistic tone to inspire the modern-day South. Always suspicious of the New South, the orator looked to the Gospel of Preservation to redirect the region towards what he claimed were more traditional goals.

⁶⁰See for example, Bryan, Speech at Blackwall, 1928. More modern interpretations stress the combination of economic and religious motivations, but the former very quickly became predominant; see Carl Bridenbaugh, Jamestown 1544-1699 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

site of exploration near Richmond. These points became sacred ground and the history associated with them part of the myth of a heroic quest. Blackwall, the site from which "the Odyssey of the Anglo-Saxon" began, was marked by the preservationists in 1928. Among others Philip Alexander Bruce had led the campaign to mark the site in the days before the outbreak of the Great War. Stirring the APVA's competition with Massachusetts, he claimed that Virginia had been "too supine even to follow the pious example set by her sister state" by laying memorials in England. "Our wonderfully energetic and intelligent Virginia women" of the APVA, he wrote, must assume this task.⁶¹ In the ceremonies which dedicated the tablet at Blackwall, and while the U.S. Navy officiated, John S. Bryan declared in his oration that the site had been a "world beacon" from which the voyagers had carried "the flame of that indistinguishable torch" of Anglo-Saxon rule. Since the APVA also sought public recognition of Virginia in Great Britain, it gained some success as the London and English newspapers provided thorough coverage of the ceremonies. An ironic slip occurred however when a London paper reported that the tablet commemorated the "105 adventurers who followed the Mayflower to America in 1606."⁶² Though the Puritans had been the target of Bryan's sarcasm in his oration, it seems that their descendants now had the last laugh.

Other points in the 1606-1607 journey had been marked earlier. In 1896 the association had placed a bronze tablet at Cape Henry while Belle Bryan, Bishop A. M. Randolph, and Charles Washington Coleman

⁶¹Bryan, Speech at Blackwall, 1928; Philip Alexander Bruce to Editor of the News-Leader, proof copy, 1914, and Bruce to [R. S.] Thomas, April 23, 1914, in Blackwall Monument Research Committee, APVA.

⁶²Bryan, Speech at Blackwall, 1928; "Girl to Unveil a Memorial," London Evening Standard, June 25, 1928, in [Serpell] Scrapbook, APVA.

officiated. Some years later, in June 1907, the APVA unveiled another monument, a pyramid of boulders, to honor the explorations of Newport and Smith at the site of Richmond. While the preservationists had hoped to place the monument at the site of the Byrd plantation, "Belvidere," they were chagrined to discover that a state penitentiary then occupied those cherished grounds.⁶³

Jamestown was the APVA's crown jewel, however, and the lynchpin in its assertions of Virginia's national priority, WASP supremacy, and traditionalist rule. Although part had washed away, most of the island remained as visible and verifiable evidence; it offered quite a contrast, moreover, with the "uncertainty and vagueness [which] hang around Plymouth Rock." Although Jamestown was an archaeological document, the proof of the Anglo-Saxon priority there was not necessarily in the pudding. Upon hearing that a nearby area actually had been founded by the Catholic Spaniards prior to the English, Lora Ellyson was taken aback. "I was surprised. . . ," she wrote Lyon Tyler, "for I had supposed that when the May 13th 1607 Adventurers landed & named the Panunsuler [sic] Jamestown, had never known any other settlers."⁶⁴

More discrediting to the APVA's claim of Jamestown's primacy over the northern settlements was the charge that the most historic section of the island had been long eroded by the James River. In his 1895 address at the Jamestown pilgrimage, Lyon G. Tyler cast doubts upon the

⁶³"Report of Recording Secretary for 1896," YB, 1896-1897, p. 23; "Report of Landmark Committee," YB, 1900-1901, p. 37; "Report of First Vice President and Acting President," YB, 1905-1908, p. 15.

⁶⁴Hall, "Introductory Address . . . 1895"; Mrs. J. Taylor Ellyson to Lyon G. Tyler, May 10, 1930, APVA File, Tyler Papers, CWM; for the Spanish mission, see Bridenbaugh, Jamestown 1544-1699, pp. 15, 17.

antiquity of the APVA's own twenty-two and one-half acre plot. That address, according to a disappointed Mary J. Galt, "proved that the ruins and our property at Jamestown, were not any part of the first settlement and are not as old as Plymouth or the Dutch of 1612."⁶⁵ Advisory Board member Samuel H. Yonge, who supervised the revetment project there, rejoined later that it was "erroneous" that "the greater part of the ancient town has been washed away." In fact, "the proof of the error is furnished by the old 'James Citty' patent records, which when properly interpreted, shows that but a small portion of the town site has been destroyed."⁶⁶ While the suggestion that the oldest section of the island had been lost was a moot point, the APVA nonetheless trumpeted Jamestown's priority throughout the land.

The enlightenment, freedom, and progress which Americans prized in the modern age, the APVA claimed, all began at Jamestown. As Lyon G. Tyler boasted in his pamphlet Virginia First, Jamestown was the "Cradle of the Union" for having "the first church, . . . the first State house, and the first free school." The South had even pioneered in the nation's business sector for Jamestown had "the first wharf, the first glass factory, the first windmill, [and] the first iron works." Even the staid Virginia Magazine of History and Biography declared that the settlement at Jamestown "meant the beginning of a commercial development which would

⁶⁵Mary J. Galt to Mrs. Bagby, May 14, 1895, Bagby Papers 78, VHS. Days before the speech, the APVA's president, fearing any damage to the Association's reputation, actually asked Tyler to delete these claims from his speech; see Parke C. Bagby to Mary J. Galt, May 11, 1895, in Mary J. Galt III, CWM. Later archaeological work has substantiated Tyler's claim.

⁶⁶Samuel H. Yonge, "The Site of Old 'James Towne,' 1607-1698," VMHB 11 (April 1904):404-405.

change the appearance of the globe."⁶⁷

Sometimes these claims of priority reached the absurd. Mary Stanard, for example, posited that the Jamestown settlers' initial banquet with Powhatan "sealed the first American League of Nations." Since Jamestown had chosen a leader in 1607, Sara Pryor thought that it represented "the first presidential election in the United States of America."⁶⁸ Cynthia Coleman took their competition with New England to heart when she declared that Jamestown in 1623 passed "the first authorized act for the annual observance of a day of Thanksgiving" and, therefore, "this time honored custom had its origin at Jamestown."⁶⁹ Jamestown, to be sure, had other firsts which the APVA chose not to highlight, including the first slaves brought into the English colonies in North America. While the Association dodged any claim for Virginia's first slave importations, one Richmond paper crudely admitted that "'politics and niggers'" had "their beginnings in this country contemporaneously."⁷⁰ After all, the preservationists preferred Jamestown as the symbol of progress and responsible rule, not of bondage and degradation.

Instead, the APVA spotlighted the positive political, religious,

⁶⁷Lyon G. Tyler, Virginia First (Richmond: Colonial Dames, 1921), p. 4; "The Historical Interest of the Settlement at Jamestown," VMHB 8 (April 1901):416.

⁶⁸Mary Newton Stanard, Richmond: Its People and Its Story (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1923), p. 6; Pryor, The Birth of the Nation, Jamestown, 1607, p. 52.

⁶⁹Cynthia B. T. Coleman, untitled address, n.d., Tucker-Coleman Papers 103, CWM. Her cousin's newspaper (and no lover of New England) nevertheless editorialized that the first American thanksgiving was in New England; see "Thanksgiving," The Richmond Times, November 27, 1902.

⁷⁰"Jamestown Island: The Observance There To-Morrow of Founder's Day," unidentified newspaper, May __ 1895, in Organizations file, APVA.

and moral values associated with the island. In 1619 its first legislative assembly had convened and that was, in the view of Thomas Nelson Page, the "greatest contribution which our race has contributed to the world."⁷¹ Intending to celebrate that fact, the United States government even asked the APVA for a small parcel of land on the island to erect a memorial obelisk. With that acknowledgment by the government, the APVA's claims for Jamestown had received a high sanction. In that same year of 1907, the Association also dedicated a second memorial to the First House of Burgesses.⁷²

The 1619 assembly was sanctified by the preservationists for its role in redeeming Virginia from a "period of martial law." In terms resembling the conservatives' characterization of postbellum Reconstruction, Lyon G. Tyler noted that prior to 1619 "the colonists were held as servants under a galling tyranny enforced by heartless governors and were not allowed the rights of property." With the 1619 charter and representative assembly, however, Jamestown became "the nursery of English liberty." Actually, that assembly was only as "representative" as that of Virginia's after the 1902 Constitution. "The Assembly, the existence of a fairly broad franchise in the colony notwithstanding, was never truly representative nor was it in any way a popular body or democratic," Carl Bridenbaugh explained. "It was a planters', not a people's parliament."

⁷¹Thomas Nelson Page, "Address . . .," in "Exercises and Addresses at the Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the First Law Making Body in the Western Hemisphere Which Convened at Jamestown, July 30, 1619" (hereafter cited as "Address," 1919), John Lesslie Hall Papers, CWM.

⁷²"Report of Norfolk Branch," YB, 1905-1908, p. 45; the limited vision of that branch concerning the role of historic preservation was aptly portrayed as it announced, "in completing this monument . . . the Branch feels it has reached a climax in its history and a sort of 'Nunc Dimittis' ['I quit'] spirit has now settled down upon it."

For at Jamestown, "the institutionalizing of the merchant-planter oligarchy took place," not the birth of democratic government.⁷³ Yet, in essence, many of the APVA's leaders were the descendants of that oligarchy.

Some preservationists also considered Jamestown the birthplace of the Virginia family. Calling the island "a new Eden," Mary Stanard claimed that the 1607 colonists had been looking for "a safe spot to which to bring an English maiden who would transform the cabin or the cottage into a home about which the new Adam and Eve would plant a garden." Stanard evidently transposed her own nineteenth-century style of domesticity into the colonial era. That safe spot, she continued, would be where "the wife could be left with her babies and housewifery while the husband went forth to till the fields or to fish and hunt in river and forest for food." Such a romantic rendition carried history to the absurd for Jamestown was anything but an Eden. It was "a society where success had always depended on exploitation that fell little short of plunder."⁷⁴ Women, as well as men, faced the toil, starvation, disease, and Indian attacks. These first maidens in Virginia, moreover, were hardly "Eves"; many were sold right off the boat as indentured servants.

Jamestown also became a Protestant mecca in America. Upon the petition of Joseph and Belle Bryan and Bishop A. M. Randolph, the APVA donated a tract of land to the Episcopal Church so that it could mark

⁷³"Settlement of Jamestown," The Richmond Times, May 14, 1895; Bridenbaugh, Jamestown 1544-1699, pp. 82, 87-88.

⁷⁴Stanard, Richmond, p. 3; for a more realistic portrait, see Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), pp. 266-267.

"the spot . . . where it was born on this Continent." Apparently Bishop Randolph considered the sixteenth-century French and Spanish to be heathens for he had declared that at Jamestown the "Christian worship of the true God found its first expression on the continent of North America." Since Jamestown had the first Protestant religious service, marriage, and Indian conversion, the APVA resolved that its Memorial Church should become a Protestant mecca "drawing all Christian Churches together, especially those who took part in the Colonial history of our Commonwealth."⁷⁵ The island was prized by the Episcopal Church, therefore, as proof of its own priority and, as some hoped, a moral inspiration to many a church congregation fixated by material progress.

The APVA also laid memorials to a number of Jamestown's heroes who illustrated its contention that a strong individual, despite a hostile environment and foes, could persevere and conquer. If any one character symbolized that hero and the APVA's own resolve to vindicate Jamestown's reputation, it was the controversial John Smith. While proposing the construction of a Smith statue on the island, Belle Bryan told the Association that "he 'discovered' Jamestown, almost as much as Columbus did America, and saved more than once the infant colony from destruction, swift and entire. We owe it to ourselves, and to him, that he shall be there!" The statue, donated by Bryan as a memorial to her deceased husband Joseph, was unveiled in 1909 with much fanfare; the ceremony, so characteristic of the Association's public affairs, was

⁷⁵"Petition of General Convention, Protestant Episcopal Church," YB, 1905-1908, p. 43; A. M. Randolph, "Restoration of Church at Jamestown, Virginia," a paper delivered at an APVA General Meeting, May 14, 1906, in MB/APVA, 1902-1907, VHS. Unsigned resolution, n.d. [c.1907], misplaced in MB/APVA, 1889-1891, VHS.

attended by "many of the most prominent persons" of Richmond.⁷⁶ Allmond Blow, the day's orator, called Smith "the foundation stone of our Anglo-Saxon lineage, the father of the Cavalier and the sponsor or promoter of the Puritan Colony in America." The future of America, Blow conjectured, had hung on Smith's shoulders; had he failed, France would have dominated these shores.⁷⁷

The fate of John Smith's reputation, in fact, probably hinged on the ability of Virginia traditionalists to revise historical opinion. Blow castigated those writers who had depicted Smith "as the dramatic hero of a dime novel incident." A more serious blight on the Smith fame had been inflicted by prominent New England writers, including Charles Deane who called the adventurer a liar and Henry Adams who accused him of colossal vanity and incompetence. Leaders of the APVA subsequently rallied to Smith's defense. William Wirt Henry, chairman of the Advisory Board and an amateur historian, most prominently assumed the task, as he called it, of rescuing "the fair name of Capt. Smith, from the imminent peril which threatens it."⁷⁸ As one writer described Henry's defense of Smith, "after the war, when there was little left but wreck and ruin to our Southland, he appeared as the fearless and successful defender of the honor of Virginia in numerous cases of aspersions cast upon her by the whole school of New England critics." Sara Pryor likewise ennobled Smith

⁷⁶President's Report, Annual Meeting, November 4, 1902, MB/APVA, 1901-1902, VHS; "Monument to Father of Virginia," unidentified newspaper, n.d., in Scrapbook on Jamestown, Organizations File, APVA.

⁷⁷Blow cited in unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d., MB/APVA, 1908-1914, VHS.

⁷⁸Blow cited in unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d., MB/APVA, 1908-1914, VHS; William Wirt Henry, "Rescue of Captain John Smith by Pocahontas," MS., [1875], Henry Papers, VHS.

for his leadership at Jamestown: he had disciplined the effeminate and anarchic, instilled the work ethic into the idle, and saved the colony through his craft in command.⁷⁹ While he did have some minor faults, these writers generally admitted, the brilliant legacy of John Smith deserved recognition and preservation.

The memory of Robert Hunt, the first Anglican minister at Jamestown, was also commemorated by the preservationists. A marble shrine and altar, jointly erected by the Episcopal Church, Colonial Dames, and APVA, were dedicated "amid imposing ceremonies of Church and State." Although earlier suggestions for a Hunt memorial had proposed a theme of Indian conversion, such as "the figure of John the Baptist in the Wilderness," the final design, probably reflecting Hunt's own real priorities, depicted him administering Communion to the colonists.⁸⁰ The shrine itself, however, was a pyrrhic victory for "preservation." Although the memory of Hunt's work had been preserved, the shrine was "constructed of brick from a majestic old ruin of colonial days, about four miles inland from Jamestown. The building was the mill of the colony and was destroyed in the Indian Massacre of 1622." Like his ally John Smith, Hunt was lauded for a "spirit able to control the turbulent company"; in the rough, elemental struggle for existence, moreover, he served as a faithful preacher

⁷⁹"William Wirt Henry," The Chronicle, December, 1900, in William Wirt Henry Scrapbook, VHS. More recent studies have refuted many of these New England charges. "Modern scholarship," reported Alden T. Vaughan, "has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt the general validity of Smith's historical and autobiographical writings"; see his American Genesis: Captain John Smith and the Founding of Virginia (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), p. 190. The Smith story, nevertheless, remains wrapped in legend and myth. Pryor, The Birth of the Nation, Jamestown, 1607, p. 207.

⁸⁰Jamestown Annual Report, 1922-1923, Box 5, APVA; for the earlier proposed design, see Cynthia B. T. Coleman to Messrs. Phipps, Slocum & Co., November 8, 1895, Coleman-Tucker Papers 58, CWM.

and "played the man."⁸¹ The Episcopal Church memorialized Hunt there-fore as a symbol of a stalwart, courageous leader, and a model for emulation by the more modern, and often flaccid, congregations.

The hagiology of Jamestown's greats also included Pocahontas and Chanco. In the nineteenth century, as genocidal policies were perpetrated against the Indians on the western frontier, Pocahontas became a folk hero and a subject for American romanticism. The APVA subsequently memorialized her life in a number of shrines. "Pocahontas's Basin," which according to legend had been a stone formation where the Indian bathed, was preserved near Petersburg. Tablets to John Smith and Pocahontas were also placed in Jamestown's Memorial Church, "the first monuments to either one of them in America," the APVA claimed.⁸² Most imposing of all the monuments to her, however, was an eighteen-foot statue erected at Jamestown by the APVA and the Pocahontas Memorial Association. When it was unveiled with pomp and ceremony in 1922 the APVA's principal orators were, quite characteristically, Thomas Nelson Page and Lyon G. Tyler.⁸³

Pocahontas was generally lauded by the preservationists because

⁸¹For the destroyed mill, see Jamestown Annual Report, 1922-1923, Box 5, APVA; the Colonial Dames, as with the Memorial Church incident, appeared to be the initiators of the demolition. "Robert Hunt Memorial," pamphlet issued by the Protestant Episcopal Church, n.d., in Vertical Files/Jamestown, APVA.

⁸²"Report of Pocahontas Branch," YB, 1901-1904, p. 62; the legend behind "Pocahontas's Basin" is mostly oral tradition and undocumented; Directory Board Meeting, February 2, 1915, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, APVA. For a general examination of the romanticization of Pocahontas see Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 86-91.

⁸³"Virginia Honors Memory of Pocahontas, Savior of Colony," unidentified newspaper, June 3, 1922, in PRM, 1922-1923, APVA.

she abandoned her own culture for that of the English. Even though she was "the only 'Royal Princess of America,'" her conversion to Christianity and marriage to John Rolfe made her "the ancestress of many distinguished Virginia families." Cynthia Coleman claimed, moreover, that Pocahontas had been God's instrument for the Anglo-Saxon triumph in Virginia: "Was it an accident that gave to this gentle savage the Christian attribute of heavenly charity? Was it not rather the divine preparation for the preservation of a Colony destined at this time to be planted and nourished into growth. The time had come when this fair western world was to be redeemed from the dominion of the savage to yield its wealth of soil and climate to that race which should dominate the world."⁸⁴ Pocahontas was memorialized, most importantly, because her example underscored America's own proud belief in its cultural superiority. According to Sara Pryor,

Pocahontas is to be honoured all the more inasmuch as she conquered every instinct in her savage nature, becoming reverent, gentle, pitiful, and patient; and correcting every blemish in her "manners barbarous," learning to "live civilly," and behaving, in all situations, with discreet gravity. Like the lovely pond lily, the root was in slime and darkness; but at the first touch of the sun the golden heart was revealed of a perfect flower.⁸⁵

The Association also paid tribute to Chanco, the Indian boy who had informed his English master of Opechancanough's plan of attack and thereby "saved the colony from extermination at the massacre of 1622." In 1908 a "chaste and simple" limestone tablet to his memory was laid in

⁸⁴William Carter Stubbs, "Address Delivered before APVA, Gloucester Branch," n.d., Addresses, APVA; Cynthia B. T. Coleman, "Jamestown," MS., n.d., Tucker-Coleman Papers 102, CWM. The assertion that the Western hemisphere was held by the Indians in trust for the Anglo-Saxons was commonly voiced. The removal of the Indians, even if it involved genocide, had been ordained by God, it was claimed.

⁸⁵Pryor, The Birth of the Nation, Jamestown, 1607, p. 300.

the Jamestown Church, while in 1929 a boulder and plaque were dedicated on the green of Surry County Court House. Another APVA branch memorialized Debdeavon, the "Laughing King of Accomacke" whose "warning likewise averted a massacre in 1622."⁸⁶ When the critical moment came in history, Pocahontas, Chanco, and Debdeavon had all proved their loyalty to the English culture. Whether they were heroes or quislings probably depends on one's perspective, but in this case the Anglo-Saxons wrote and preserved the history.

Williamsburg became another focal point in the APVA's memorialization of Virginia's past greatness. After many decades the quaint town still had the old colonial charm; Philip Alexander Bruce noted: "There the ghosts of the most aristocratic society that ever flourished on our continent still flit about. . . . To pass down the long street is to be lost in dreams of a past that vies in interest with the one suggested by the streets of some old English town, which counts its age by the centuries." Notwithstanding its charm, Charles W. Coleman noted with chagrin that the town had decayed greatly and "Williamsburg, in the minds of many, has come to mean a lunatic asylum."⁸⁷ The tasks of the APVA, therefore, were to commemorate Williamsburg's past greatness,

⁸⁶ Committee on Jamestown Memorial Building, February 12, 1908, MB/APVA 1908-1914; Annual Report of Committee on Jamestown Memorial Building, January 4, 1909, MB/APVA, 1908-1914, APVA. At the same time a "much larger and handsome" marble tablet was dedicated to the Colonial Governors; for the Eastern Shore see an undated broadside, Northampton Branch Correspondence, Box 3, APVA.

⁸⁷ Philip Alexander Bruce, Virginia: Rebirth of the Old Dominion II (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), pp. 332, 333; Charles W. Coleman, "The Picturesque and Traditional in the Story of a Colonial City," an address delivered before the APVA, March 20, 1891, Tucker-Coleman Papers 101, CWM; Coleman's reference was to the Eastern State Hospital, the oldest public asylum in the United States and one of Williamsburg's principal institutions.

rejuvenate its associated values, and thereby help restore the underpinnings of traditionalist society.

The Association enshrined many sites during the first "preservation" of Williamsburg: the Raleigh Tavern site, the Clerk's office, the debtor's prison, the Peyton Randolph house, and the Blair house were all marked by APVA tablets or plaques.⁸⁸ The site of the House of Burgesses, whose foundations the APVA owned, became the centerpiece of its work and it was marked in 1904 with a boulder and plaque which commemorated the signing of the Non-Importation agreements of 1769 and 1774. Calling the site "holy ground," Cynthia Coleman led this commemorative campaign and had earlier predicted that "the youth of the land [will] here learn that true greatness is to be found in love of country and in the performance of Duty."⁸⁹ The impressive dedication ceremonies included great fanfare and speeches by Rev. W. A. R. Goodwin, Lyon G. Tyler, Thomas Nelson Page, Joseph Bryan, and John Lesslie Hall.

While the APVA concentrated its work on these tidewater sites, it also memorialized the key role which Virginia had played in overland expansion. The Old Dominion had been the spearhead, some preservationists claimed, for the creation of the American continental empire. "The Southern spirit bore the ensign of the Anglo-Saxon across the mountains, seized the West, and created the American continent," Thomas Nelson Page boasted. "Had the New England influences, which were opposed to the

⁸⁸ Meeting of October 12, 1906, Minutes, Colonial Capital Branch, Box 1, CWM; the house which they attributed to Peyton Randolph and subsequently marked, however, was in error; see V. M. Geddy to Mrs. A. D. Jones, August 5, 1932, in Colonial Capital Branch, Box 2, CWM.

⁸⁹ Cynthia B. T. Coleman, Address at YMCA, Baltimore, March, 1896, in Tucker-Coleman Papers 103, CWM.

Annexation policy dominated," he conjectured, "the United States to-day, if it existed at all, would be confined to a narrow slip along the Atlantic shore." As it commemorated this expansionism, the AVPA marked distinct stages in the process. The ouster of the Algonquian Indians was celebrated by the Bloody Run Gully monument near Richmond; that site, the APVA reported, was the "last successful stand of [the] Indians" against the Virginians.⁹⁰ Virginia's role in the conquest of the Ohio Valley was represented by various APVA tributes to George Rogers Clark, the Hannibal of the West; in 1909, they proposed marking the site of his birthplace and, eight years later, that site was reportedly acquired for the Association. Furthermore, the Lewis and Clark expedition, which had explored the Louisiana Territory, was memorialized when the Association restored and maintained the grave of John Lewis. Characteristic of the APVA's interpretation of these westward thrusts was Thomas Nelson Page's assertion that Lewis and Clark explored in behalf of American "liberty and Protestantism."⁹¹ Scarcely any mention was made of the more important motives of imperial competition, commercial enterprise, and hunger for land. The pedagogic and inspirational mission of the preservationists led them to stress the altruistic, not realistic, motives of the expansionists.

In the APVA's estimation of the past, Bacon's rebellion of 1676 was an illustrious episode which had foretold Virginia's future. Cynthia

⁹⁰Page, "The Old South," p. 16; for the Bloody Run Monument, see Mrs. Granville Valentine, et al., Committee Research--Memorial Markers, n.d., [1925], in Trustee Information, Box 10, APVA.

⁹¹For Clark tribute, see "Report of Monticello Branch," YB, 1908-1910, p. 52, and Directory Board meeting, April 3, 1917, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS; for Lewis, see Meeting, January 8, 1898, MB/APVA, 1898, VHS; Page, "The Old South," p. 13.

Coleman spearheaded a drive, which culminated in 1901, to place a memorial window in Williamsburg's Powder Horn to honor "the gallant rebel." Mary Stanard, chairman of the Landmark Committee, endorsed that tribute to "the first Virginian to enjoy the distinction of being dubbed with the title of 'rebel'---since made so dear to Southern hearts."⁹² In the view of Stanard, who was then Bacon's "only full-dress biographer," the rebellion was for Virginia "the most portentous, the most dramatic, [and] the most picturesque event of its seventeenth century history." Such an opinion actually reflected a century-long effort by Virginia to revise the historical record. As Dixon Wecter pointed out, Bacon "seems to have been remembered chiefly as a trouble-maker" throughout most of the eighteenth century and it was only in the subsequent years that he became a subject of hero worship.⁹³

Like many contemporary historians, the APVA's orators and writers considered Bacon's rebellion to be a foreshadowing of the American Revolution. Thomas Nelson Page, for example, claimed that Bacon's act "was at bottom for the same cause with that which a hundred years later was led by George Washington"; they both fought for "the inalienable right of British subjects to have self-government [and] both of them were based on the original Charter under which Virginia was planted." The rebellion was justified, as was that of 1776, and even that of 1861

⁹²"Williamsburg Report," A.P.V.A. [YB], 1896, p. 55; "Report of Landmark Committee, YB, 1898-1899, p. 26; see also Robert S. Bright, The Address . . . at the Unveiling of the Memorial Window to Nathaniel Bacon . . . (Richmond: p.p., 1941).

⁹³Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 29; Mary Newton Stanard, The Story of Bacon's Rebellion (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1907), p. 9; Wecter, Hero in America, p. 27.

if the implication followed, since "this was a revolution of the people based on the people's rights against the government supported by a privileged class." Bacon had been a gifted leader who "arose, as one sent from Heaven," Cynthia Coleman wrote, and he won a "popularity among all classes" as he fought for liberty and "a bitter vengeance [sic] wreaked upon the Indian foe." Although in "many ways a Lost Cause," Mary Stanard also observed, his rebellion was successful because it provided "comparative safety from the Red Peril for Eastern Virginia."⁹⁴ The APVA's leadership, therefore, viewed Bacon as a democratic, popular leader; his rebellion had been a just cause against governmental oppression and Indian turpitude and in defense of liberty and popular rule.

Later historians and more definitive accounts, however, have reached far different conclusions than the myth of Bacon as a democratic reformer. "The causes of Bacon's rebellion are complex and profound," wrote Wilcomb Washburn. "They cannot be explained in terms of Berkeley's 'greed' and 'oppression,' Bacon's love of 'liberty,' the 'savagery' of the Indians, or the patriotism of the frontiersmen; such explanatory descriptions are meaningless labels pasted on the actors by those who see all history as a morality play." Whereas the rebellion was actually sparked by the frontiersmen's obstinate determination to wrest the land from the Indians, it produced no real reform program and no defense of abstract liberties. "Nathaniel Bacon would be vastly amused," Washburn concluded, "to find himself the sainted hero of the guardians of the

⁹⁴Page, Address . . . Jamestown, p. 24; Page, "Address," 1919, p. 28; Coleman, "Annals of Williamsburg"; Stanard, Richmond, p. 13.

liberal traditions of western democratic government."⁹⁵

The explanation for the APVA's interpretation is perhaps three-fold. While they voiced the contemporary view of Bacon as a democratic reformer, they also strove to embellish his reputation for the sake of the Old Dominion. By firmly placing his rebellion within the context of the American Revolution, they claimed, moreover, that the subsequent actions of 1861 had had a historical precedent. Finally, and more implicitly, the APVA underscored the notion that the American style of revolution and rebellion was democratic, popular, and noble. The "Red Peril" which America faced when Page spoke and Stanard wrote was not the Indian, but socialist revolution. It was a curious fact that groups such as the APVA and the DAR worshipped anything positive associated with the American Revolution, yet cringed at the sound of European-style revolt. The APVA, after all, considered history to be that morality play; its reading of the Gospel of Preservation buttressed the perceived need for conservative, traditionalist, and "representative" rule.

Since history was a pedagogic lesson, the APVA also memorialized Virginia's past efforts in education and religion. In 1902 the Association, in conjunction with the DAR, placed a bronze tablet at the Syms-Eaton Academy in Hampton to commemorate the founding of the earliest free school in the country. Later, the Williamsburg branch, prompted chiefly by the boosterism of Lyon G. Tyler and John Lesslie Hall, laid three tablets honoring the College of William and Mary. That institution had long been a showcase for traditionalist Virginia and its poor physical

⁹⁵ Wilcomb E. Washburn, The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 166; see also Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, p. 269.

and financial condition proved the real need for Tyler's boosterism. The first tablet depicted the "Priorities" of the college and cited the fact that it was the first in "antecedents"; that is, its planning and endowment preceded Harvard's. It was the first, moreover, to teach Political Economy (1784), the first to have a school of history (1803), and the organizer of Phi Beta Kappa (1776). A second plaque celebrated the distinguished alumni of the college, including Jefferson, Washington, Wythe, and Edmund and Peyton Randolph. The final tablet, "William and Mary's Part In Developing The Union," memorialized the college's and the Old Dominion's leadership in expansionism, constitutionalism, and hemispheric independence.⁹⁶

Interrelated with these efforts to memorialize earlier education was the work of many preservationists who worked actively to improve Virginia's educational system and lobbied their governments to increase its funding. Cynthia Coleman, for one, deplored the past retrenchments in funding when she wrote: "Withhold not from the Sons of Virginia the educational advantages meted out without stint to every race and colour in every State in this republic. Equip the youth of Virginia for the arena of life and then will you see the Virginia of the past live again in her sons."⁹⁷ Since the cult of domesticity had taught women to seek their fame through their sons, it perhaps was expected that the ladies of the APVA would plead for better schools for their sons, while accepting

⁹⁶For the Hampton tablet, see "Report of the Kicotan Branch," YB, 1905-1908, p. 53; "Tablets of Honor at William and Mary College," a descriptive brochure dated February 14, 1914, in PRM, 1913-1914, APVA.

⁹⁷Cynthia Coleman, untitled address, n.d., Tucker-Coleman Papers 103, CWM; the writer surely misspoke and realized that education for black sons of Virginia was far from unstinted.

a secondary status for themselves and their daughters.

Religious and moral inspiration, moreover, was a byproduct of the APVA's rendition of history. While preserving and marking churches and graveyards, primarily those of Episcopalians and Presbyterians, the Association's leaders lauded the religiosity of their ancestors. Virginia's rivalry with New England again came to the fore when Lyon G. Tyler claimed that "the persecuting spirit . . . was never so severe or relentless [in the Old Dominion] as in New England." As the APVA honored Virginia's colonial clergy, moreover, the historical portrait which it drew was shaped by its own moralizing stance. In 1903, for example, a local branch placed a memorial window in St. John's Church of Hampton to honor the colonial clergy of that parish. While the window listed twenty-one ministers, one name was set off from the others. The preservationists declared somewhat self-righteously: "The Rev. Jeremiah Taylor's name is enclosed in brackets, indicating that though historically entitled to be included in the record, morally it has no right to this tribute since the records show that he was indicted by the grand jury for drunkenness and conduct unbecoming a minister of the gospel."⁹⁸ Since the past was most important for lessons in the present, according to the APVA's Gospel of Preservation, the life of Reverend Taylor was not one which the Association cared to endorse.

Like the proponents of the New South creed, the APVA spotlighted the early strides which Virginia had made in the iron industry. The Association worked for years to mark the site of the 1619 iron furnace

⁹⁸ Tyler, Virginia First, p. 11; "Report of the Kicotan Branch," YB, 1905-1908, pp. 54-55; the report mentioned the word "indicted," not "guilty."

built at Falling Creek in Chesterfield County. Although destroyed in the Massacre of 1622 that foundry had earlier had its own labor problems. In 1895, a few years after the Homestead Steel strike, Lyon G. Tyler evoked that comparison in unmistakable, albeit unspoken, terms. Quoting the opinion of George Sandys, the wealthy treasurer of the Jamestown colony and a labor driver there, Tyler characterized the Italian workers at Falling Creek as "'a more damned crew hell never vomited.'" As with modern "birds of passage" at Homestead perhaps, industrial vandalism was committed; one worker, for example, "broke the furnace with his crowbar" in order "to promote their return to England."⁹⁹ Jamestown obviously had had its own problems with "immigrant" labor, difficulties which resulted from the bondage and exploitation which these workers faced. The APVA, however, marked the site as a symbol of the Old Dominion's priority in industry, not as a precedent for Virginia's subjugation of its workforce. Even as a symbol of the state's leadership in the iron industry, moreover, the commemoration was deceptive. While Falling Creek preceded Saugus in Massachusetts, it proved to be an ephemeral and unique experiment.

The APVA Interprets the Past: The New
Nation and the Old South

Although the APVA concentrated its focus upon Jamestown and Williamsburg during the colonial period, buildings, sites, and events associated with the Revolution, the early national period, and the Old South were equally within its purview. Just as the Association worked in harmony with the Colonial Dames in their mutual sanctification of the

⁹⁹Tyler quoted in "Settlement of Jamestown," The Richmond Times, May 14, 1895.

colonial past, so too did it form a common cause with the Daughters of the American Revolution and other patriotic groups in the commemoration of later events. Actually the colonial, revolutionary, and national periods were interconnected in the minds of most preservationists; the past was described as a chain with specific links binding each event. Yet only those events and heroes which redounded to the benefit of traditionalist rule were memorialized.

The Revolution, and particularly Virginia's leadership of it, became a focal point for the APVA's preservation work because it not only strove to counter New England's overshadowing of the Old Dominion, but to document the inspirational lessons of the past. Williamsburg's House of Burgesses' site and Powder Horn figured prominently in the Association's portrayal of those events. William Wirt Henry, for example, often highlighted in his writings and APVA-oriented work the role that his grandfather played there. When the stamp tax was decreed in 1765 and Massachusetts "faltered and vacillated," he declared, the Virginians, led by Henry, spoke out "as the Divinity that shapes our ends had ordered." There the Burgesses also passed the May 1765 resolutions which "commenced" the Revolution; the resolution of eleven years later, Henry continued with much exaggeration, "completed the American Revolution, for all that remained was to maintain the position she had reached."¹⁰⁰ After the

¹⁰⁰William Wirt Henry, "One Hundredth Anniversary of the Introduction and Adoption of the 'Resolutions Respecting Independence,'" an address delivered in Philadelphia, June 7, 1876, MS., VHS (hereafter cited as "Resolutions Respecting Independency"); Henry was fond of citing his grandfather's famed oratory, such as the "Give Me Liberty . . ." or "If This Be Treason . . ." addresses. These speeches, it must be noted, were largely the constructions of Henry's eulogizing and imaginative biographer, William Wirt. As Bernard Mayo concluded, "what Parson Weems did for Washington . . . , Wirt did for Henry in his biography of 1817"; see his Myths and Men: Patrick Henry, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson (New

Battles of Lexington and Concord, Virginia's Governor Lord Dunmore seized the stocks at the Powder Horn; "it was to the colonies in 1775," Joseph Bryan claimed, "what Lincoln's Proclamation proved to be to the Southern States in 1861."¹⁰¹

In the estimation of these APVA leaders, Virginia had headed the eighteenth-century revolutionary vanguard. While contemporary school-books taught that the South had produced "more Tories than any other section," Mary Stanard retorted that in Virginia "the majority . . . saw bowing to the will of a king and parliament turned tyrants . . . as slavery."¹⁰² These patriots, moreover, had acted not out of self-interest, Thomas Nelson Page added, as they "gave up wealth and ease and security . . . and launched undaunted on the sea of revolution." They went to war for principle, and "in defence of abstractions," J. L. M. Curry emphasized in an obvious attempt to separate America's revolution from the reputedly less noble English (1688) and French

York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1959), pp. 14-15, and Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 359. William Wirt Henry, for that matter, continued the role of hagiographer. Philip Alexander Bruce nonetheless claimed that W. W. Henry performed the "pious duty of clearing the great orator's fame from the clouds imposed upon it by jealousy and malice"; see his "The True Patrick Henry," unidentified newspaper, January 19, 1908, in Elizabeth Lyons Scrapbook 2, VHS. Incidentally, in 1899 the APVA proposed marking the site of the William Wirt home; "Report of Landmark Committee," YB, 1899, p. 29.

¹⁰¹[Joseph Bryan], "The Old Powder-Horn," The Richmond Daily Times, January 19, 1890.

¹⁰²Elson, Guardians of Tradition, p. 178; Stanard, Richmond, p. 29. While Stanard's "majority" may be problematic, it was true, as William H. Nelson noted, Virginia supported "the Revolution, or rather her own revolution, with a unanimity perhaps almost as great as that of Massachusetts"; see his The American Tory (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 42.

(1789) revolutions.¹⁰³ Preservationists evidently felt that the pure deeds of Washington and Henry had to be contrasted with the unscrupulous acts of Robespierre and later Lenin.

The Association enshrined a number of revolutionary-era sites. In an obvious attempt to deflate Paul Revere's reputation, it laid a tablet near Charlottesville to the memory of Jack Jouett. As it "rescued from forgetfulness" his historic deeds, the APVA declared that Jouett had "surpassed Paul Revere in the number of miles he rode and the exact time in which he accomplished his mission . . . to warn the Legislature of the approach of Tarleton and his raiders."¹⁰⁴ Virginia's naval hero, John Paul Jones, received the preservationists' tribute as well when the Association marked his Fredericksburg home in 1911. The site of the Richmond Convention of 1775, moreover, was marked in 1911 by the General Assembly with the aid of the APVA. Many other sites and events were memorialized: Westham Ordnance Foundry, where arms were manufactured not only during the Revolution, but during the Civil War as well; the Richmond site of the home of Major James Gibbon; and the homes of Peyton Randolph and George Wythe. Occasionally the process whereby a site was marked bordered upon the pedantic. At a time, for example, when other preservationists, notably the SPNEA's William Sumner Appleton, were concerned about commercial and modern changes in Yorktown, that branch of the APVA declared its principal work in 1921 to be the "obtaining of

¹⁰³Page, "The Old South," p. 25; see also his "Old Yorktown," p. 814; J. L. M. Curry, Lessons of the Yorktown Centennial: An Address (Richmond: Dispatch Steam Printing House, 1881).

¹⁰⁴"Mrs. Ellyson Reviews Year's Work of A.P.V.A.," The Richmond Virginian, January 9, 1911, in 1894-1917 Washington Branch Record Book, APVA.

data concerning the exact spot of the surrender of Cornwallis, the appropriate marking of the spot, and [the] care of same."¹⁰⁵ According to the APVA's reading of the Gospel of Preservation, the preservation of this data and the popularization of the memories and values which the site symbolized were as important as any other work in historic preservation.

Virginia's leadership during the constitutional period was also commemorated by the Association. As the APVA placed a memorial at Richmond's old "Academy," Mary Stanard noted that the building had held "the most momentous assemblage ever convened in Richmond--The Convention of 1788, through which the Virginia ratification of the United States Constitution was made." Notwithstanding these strident declarations of Virginia's long-standing loyalty to the Constitution, preservationists contended, however, that the federal government must also recognize Virginia's rights as a state. William Wirt Henry lauded his grandfather, for instance, for his recognition "that the powers granted to the Federal Government were too great, and that the result would be the absorption of the rights of the States, even to the freeing of our slaves." His points of opposition which were expressed in 1788, he continued, "read today, seem like the utterances of one inspired, so completely have his predictions been verified." A state's right to control its own destiny was such a fixed idea for these Virginians that had it not been recognized in 1788, Joseph Bryan privately contended, Virginia "would never have acceded to that constitution but would have remained a

¹⁰⁵ Meeting of February 18, 1921, APVA Yorktown Branch Minutes, CWM.

sovereign, independent state until the crack of doom."¹⁰⁶ Although the preservationists enshrined the Constitution, clearly their concept of unionism was premised upon the firm bedrock of Virginia's local autonomy.

At a time when hero worship was rife, the APVA added to it by honoring the memories of many of its native sons. The Association suggested the dedication of a number of memorials to George Washington, a figure who, according to Peter Karsten, was then particularly revered by "the nativist elite"; these sites included his headquarters in Winchester during the Seven Years War, the Alexandria site where he delivered his last public address, and the Fredericksburg home of his mother, Mary Ball. The image of Washington which the APVA had inherited and subsequently transmitted was thoroughly Weemsian, that is, as America's highest hero and purest saint.¹⁰⁷

The debunking biographers of Washington during the 1920s, on the other hand, generally sought to remove America's heroes from their pedestals. Their assertions usually ran counter to the APVA's own efforts to create models for emulation and inspiration. Emma Read Ball, an APVA vice president who was married to a great nephew of Washington, for example, had spent many years documenting Washington's descent from illustrious English nobility. Yet the opening sentence of W. E. Woodward's

¹⁰⁶"Report of Landmark Committee," YB, 1898-1899, p. 28, emphasis added; William Wirt Henry, "Patrick Henry," MS., Henry Essays, VHS; Joseph Bryan to Col. John S. Mosby, November 13, 1899, Bryan Letterbook, VHS.

¹⁰⁷Peter Karsten, Patriot-Heroes in England and America: Political Symbolism and Changing Values over Three Centuries (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 89; for proposed Washington markers, see "Report of Landmark Committee," YB, 1898-1899, pp. 29-30; the best analysis of the various guises of Washington may be found in Marcus Cunliffe, George Washington, Man and Monument (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958).

first chapter in his debunking biography claimed: "George Washington came of a family that must be called undistinguished, unless a persistent mediocrity, enduring many generations, is in itself a distinction." Instead of a Washington cast as Saint George, as the hagiographers had done, Woodward portrayed him as "the average man dignified and raised to the nth power" and a "thoroughly undemocratic" American.¹⁰⁸ The hagiographers and the debunkers obviously stood at opposite poles.

The APVA's continued commitment to hagiography was illustrated by the controversy in 1923 whether Houdon's sculpture of Washington should have been removed from its pedestal in the Virginia Capitol. When one Smithsonian Institution consultant asked the APVA to aid in the de-pedestaling drive, the Association refused and deferred the question to the State Art Committee. The sense of traditionalist Richmond, however, had been provoked; a popular editorialist, in turn, wrote an open letter to the APVA. "I revere the memory of George Washington," he wrote, "and I cannot stand the thought of his looking squarely in the eye a lot of people in the public life of Virginia today."¹⁰⁹ As the controversy closed, Washington remained on his pedestal and firmly entrenched in his myth.

Quite curiously the legacy of Jefferson was somewhat neglected by the Association. While the Charlottesville branch did propose the marking of his birthplace at "Shadwell," the APVA undertook little action elsewhere to directly commemorate the illustrious Virginian. Perhaps

¹⁰⁸For Ball, see Meeting of December 4, 1918, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS; W. E. Woodward, George Washington: The Image and the Man (New York: Liveright, 1946), pp. 8, 453, 454.

¹⁰⁹"Open Letter from Father Byrd to the A.P.V.A.," unidentified newspaper, n.d., in PRM, 1922-1923, APVA.

this neglect resulted from the short shrift which Jefferson had received in most schoolbooks of the day; these works noted, particularly and negatively, his admiration for the French Revolution, his partisan opposition to Washington, and his institution of the spoils system.

Jefferson's poor reputation, Thomas Nelson Page also claimed, stemmed from the "rancor [which] has ever been directed against great reformers. And Thomas Jefferson was not only the leading radical of his day; but was the boldest reformer in America. He struck at Privilege with all his might, no matter how highly placed or strongly entrenched it was." As the "Apostle of Liberty," Page continued, Jefferson "believed in the People--not only in the rights of the People, but in the People themselves." As a result, the memory of Jefferson was "still assailed implacably by the forces of reaction and of servility."¹¹⁰ When Jefferson's reputation was eventually redeemed through the efforts of historians such as William E. Dodd and Claude Bowers, the leaders of the Old Dominion would increase their attention and proudly broadcast that the Sage of Monticello had been the defender of local rule and states' rights. Prior to that time, however, the APVA's own tidewater and eastern bias, together with Jefferson's ambiguous legacy, probably led to its disregard for the most radical of Virginia's revolutionary-era leaders.

The figure of John Marshall, however, stood near the apex of the hagiology of Virginia's heroes. When the APVA opened the Marshall shrine in 1913 its interpreter, Mary Stanard, claimed to depict Marshall as a human being, not as a pedestaled statue. Yet her adulation still bordered

¹¹⁰ Thomas Nelson Page, "Thomas Jefferson; Apostle of Liberty," address, n.d., Page Papers 20B-36, Duke. Page at times portrayed some populist sentiments, as with his advocacy of Jefferson's commemoration. Moreover, his great-grandfather John Page had been a close friend of Jefferson.

on sanctification. His life was an object lesson for the twentieth century, Stanard claimed, for his privation and hard work had led to his greatness. "Reared in frugality on a frontier farm," Marshall developed no "taste for the ornate in dress, manners or speech." Unlike the bombast of later orators, his speeches were "colored with no flowers of rhetoric, but were spoken straight to the judgment, for the single purpose of convincing." While citing his simplicity as "his most striking characteristic," she lauded him "for carrying the virtue of simplicity to an extreme that made it a fault, and thus saving a sufficiently perfect picture from the monotony of over-perfection."¹¹¹

Although Marshall supposedly had been de-pedestaled, his legacy nonetheless had been safely enshrined. According to one local account of Stanard's interpretation, Marshall became "a real flesh and blood human being and not the bronze figure of a demigod set up high out of our lives and entirely out of touch."¹¹² Yet to a South which lusted at times for wealth and comfort, it was problematic how inspirational Marshall's simplicity would be. Marshall's greatest accomplishment, however, had been the Constitution; as Mary Stanard pointed out, Virginia, although once accused of treason, had originally crafted the Union. Through the Marshall shrine, the APVA continually stressed that fact as it preached the virtues of Virginia's conservatism in the nation.

The theme of unionism was also cited by the Association when it

¹¹¹Elson, Guardians of Tradition, pp. 208-209; Mary Newton Stanard, John Marshall and his Home, Read before the A.P.V.A. at the Opening of the John Marshall House, March 27, 1913 (Richmond: Wm. Ellis Jones, 1913), pp. 19, 27.

¹¹²"Opening of the Marshall House," unidentified newspaper, March 27, 1913, in PRM, 1913-1914, APVA.

erected a tablet in 1928 at the Hanover County birthplace of Henry Clay. Clay's contemporary James Monroe was honored as well by the preservationists when they joined the Southern Commercial Congress and the State of Virginia in celebrating the centennial of the Monroe Doctrine. While the official proclamation issued at the celebration praised the doctrine for sounding the "death knell of the exploitation of the Western Hemisphere by foreign powers,"¹¹³ the long established Virginia tradition, however, had been the expectation that South American wealth would enrich the American South.

The Association also honored Edgar Allan Poe as one of America's great writers. Although the South had been "derelict" in her literary work, Thomas Nelson Page admitted, the figure of Poe, nonetheless, stood out. The APVA subsequently marked the Allan House in Richmond in 1907. Five years later it acquired the "Old Stone House," a building which would be converted into and independently operated in 1921 as a Poe Shrine.¹¹⁴ Its actions actually reflected a sharp reversal in public attitudes concerning Poe. A late nineteenth-century suggestion to erect a monument to Poe in Richmond, Page recounted, had brought such "a violent opposition . . . by one of the daily papers" that the proposal had been dropped.¹¹⁵ Yet by 1909, the year of Poe's centennial, opinion had turned around. His fame and that of the Southern Literary Messenger

¹¹³Committee Research--Memorial Markers, n.d., Trustee Information, Box 10, APVA; "Commonwealth of Virginia, Governor's Office, Proclamation," December 7, 1923, in PRM, 1922-1923, APVA.

¹¹⁴Page, Address . . . History of the South, p. 14; "Report of Landmark Committee," YB, 1905-1908, p. 41.

¹¹⁵Thomas Nelson Page, "The First American Man of Letters," MS., n.d., Page Papers 20B-36, Duke.

were subsequently cited as examples to refute the northern charge that Virginia lacked a literary culture. While Poe's deserved fame was acknowledged, however, his solitary example offered little sustenance for Virginia's competition with New England.

For the APVA this early national period was most equated with the Old South. That cherished civilization, according to the Association's leaders, had grown from strong roots in the colonial and revolutionary eras. Although the Old South was seldom memorialized in bronze or stone by the preservationists, its legacy was repeatedly evoked. The traditionalists' defense of the antebellum South, in fact, was inextricably linked to the preservation and recognition of Virginia's commanding stature during the more formative years. The APVA's leaders labored, moreover, to build the Old Dominion of their own day firmly on the traditions, order, and calibre of leadership which had guided the Old South. The crux of the mission for many traditionalist leaders, therefore, became the sanctification of the legacy of the Old South.

While many prominent preservationists ably defended the Old South, perhaps the most popular and outspoken was Thomas Nelson Page. Actually Page was heir to a well-established literary tradition concerning the plantation. In his romanticized portrayals, he often cleverly used the past as a foil to attack the present. Unlike the 1880s and 1890s when political corruption was abundant, he claimed, for example, that "'the personal integrity'" of antebellum public leaders "'was never doubted.'" The society of the Old South, moreover, had offered "'the purest, sweetest life ever lived'" ; its "domestic virtues [were] as common as the light and air that we live in and breathe, and filled the homes of

the South with purity and peace."¹¹⁶ Page's rendition was certainly more invention and myth than good history; what he did was to transpose his own plantation and childhood memories onto the entire southern society. The important fact, however, was that Page's invention became the APVA's documentation.

Besides defending states' rights and strict constructionism, Page and others labored to legitimize the Old South's subjugation of the Negro. Repeatedly and at every opportune moment these preservationists shifted the blame for slavery upon New England. According to Page, slavery "was brought upon the South without its fault, and continued to be forced upon her against her protests."¹¹⁷ Joseph Bryan, moreover, found it "a source of great gratification . . . to know that careful investigation has failed to show that any Virginian was ever engaged in the African slave trade."¹¹⁸ Some Virginians, notably Page and Fitzhugh Lee, even made the claim, based on local tradition, that the Mayflower

¹¹⁶Page quoted in Raymond H. Pulley, Old Virginia Restored: An Interpretation of the Progressive Impulse, 1870-1930 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968), p. 61; Page, Address . . . History of the South, p. 17.

¹¹⁷Page, "The Old South," p. 37; Lyon G. Tyler similarly claimed this on a number of occasions. A later observation on the Virginia slave trade, however, concluded: "Any close reading of the evidence quickly suggests how little support there is for this point of view"; Thad W. Tate, The Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1965), pp. 29-30.

¹¹⁸Joseph Bryan to J. Henning Nelms, August 13, 1896, Bryan Letter-book, VHS; this claim was frequently cited by Page, Tyler, and others as well. Since Virginia lacked a viable trans-Atlantic shipping industry, it became much more entrenched in this internal slave trade. Whether or not Virginians were involved in the African trade is problematic. They certainly were employed, however, in bringing slaves in from the West Indies; see Tate, Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg, p. 28, and Winthrop D. Jordan, White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968), p. 321.

became a slave trader after taking the Pilgrims to Plymouth. Surely this assertion was pleasing to Virginia's pride, as were most other attacks on New England, but this legend illustrated nothing more than regional partisanship carried to the extreme. Virginia traditionalists commonly asserted, moreover, that New England opposed the abolition of the slave trade at the Constitutional Convention. As Joseph Bryan explained, "it is also a fact that the extension of [the] slave trade for twenty years as provided in our Constitution was done in spite of the protest of Virginia and was insisted on by the New England states."¹¹⁹ These claims by Page, Bryan, Tyler, and other APVA leaders concerning slavery and the slave trade were at best specious; more commonly, however, rank partisanship and misreadings of the past characterized these attacks.

While acknowledging that it was best that slavery had been abolished, these preservationists often claimed, as did Page, that slavery had been the "salvation" of the Negro. "In my judgment," he continued, "the system of African slavery was, certainly for the major portion of the time it existed in the South, the greatest blessing that has ever happened to the negro race." Reflecting his own cultural chauvinism, he furthered that it was a blessing for "it gave them the only civilization that the race has had the world over. It has given them Christianity."

¹¹⁹ Joseph Bryan to J. Henning Nelms, August 13, 1896, Bryan Letter-book, VHS; the historical record extant in 1896 proved otherwise. Even James Madison had conceded that South Carolina and Georgia were "'inflexible'" in the opposition to the abolition. Virginia and New England joined together at the convention and compromised so as to preserve the Union; see Robert McColley, Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia 2d ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 163. Virginia was willing to abolish the trade, moreover, since the decline in the profitability of slavery created an environment where these moral concerns could be raised; see Jordan, White over Black, pp. 320, 324.

Page, Bryan, and others maintained, moreover, that the slaves had been treated most kindly; master and slave had even shared an intimate bond on the plantation. Yet the paternalistic order of the plantation South, C. V. Woodward explained, had defined very explicitly the role and status of each. "Certainty of status permitted 'direct intimacy' and affective bonds between the races and encouraged 'pseudotolerance' in the master class." This master-servant bond, according to Eugene Genovese, was a major foundation for the special civilization of the Old South.¹²⁰ As long as white Virginians felt the security of that relationship, this intimacy could prevail. With emancipation and particularly a new generation of blacks raised in semi-free conditions, however, white Virginians in the 1890s feared that blacks were reverting to African ways and they subsequently became uncertain about their social peace.¹²¹ The traditionalist renaissance and its political culmination in the Constitution of 1902 restored the old order, but without the intimacy and romanticism of yore.

According to these writers, the South went to war in 1861, not to protect slavery as some in the North had charged, but to defend its notion of liberty and union. Although the APVA's by-laws stipulated a cut-off date of 1861 for its historical concern, the Association

¹²⁰Page, Address . . . History of the South, p. 15; C. Vann Woodward, "The Strange Career of a Historical Controversy," in American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 250; Eugene D. Genovese, "The Slave South: An Interpretation," in The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy & Society of the Slave South (Random House: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 35.

¹²¹See for example, Thomas Nelson Page, The Negro: The Southerner's Problem (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904) and Howard N. Rabinowitz, Race Relations in the Urban South 1865-1890 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 334.

nonetheless enshrined a number of Confederate sites. As a Confederate revival swept Richmond in the 1890s and after, the APVA joined in by marking the Lee House, "one of the landmarks of the Confederacy" which, Kate Mason Rowland reported, was "revered by us all as the home, during the existence of the Southern Confederacy, of its great military chief-tain, General Robert E. Lee."¹²² Besides preserving the Jamestown Confederate fort and the Westham Ordnance Foundry, the APVA also supported the preservation of Stratford Hall, Lee's birthplace. While admitting that the Confederate organizations had the greatest interest in the Stratford project, the Association declared that "in a broader sense it may well be the mission of us all" since it offered "the greatest reverence and interest of any house save Mount Vernon."¹²³ Although the Old South had collapsed in 1865, its inspirational legacy was perpetuated to shape the future.

In conclusion, the partisan purposes and political goals of these orators and writers in the APVA shaped the method of analysis which they employed when studying the Old Dominion's past. Since they used history primarily to inspire and teach the present generations, their version of the past was narrow, moralistic, and refined; history became a hagiology detailing Virginia's past greatness. Anything damaging to their ancestors, families, traditions, or commonwealth was carefully excised from the preserved past. While Jamestown was enshrined as the birthplace of represen-

¹²²"Report of Landmark Committee, " YB, 1900-1901, p. 37; in 1893 the Lee House was donated to the Virginia Historical Society by Belle Bryan and her parents under the proviso that the APVA could likewise use it for their headquarters. The links between the VHS and APVA not only included this shrine, but leadership and goals as well.

¹²³General Meeting, November 6, 1916, MB/APVA, 1914-1921, VHS.

tative government in 1619, for example, the preservationists made no mention that it later became a rotten borough whose seat in the legislature was controlled by two families. Similarly, the Association's depiction of history often was the story of Virginia's leading families, but the modern hagiographers carefully deleted most points of controversy from the lives of their forebears. Just as Joseph Bryan hushed any word of extramarital love affairs in the life of his revered ancestor John Randolph, so did William Wirt Henry edit from his story any existence of Patrick Henry's bartending days.

The interpretation of Virginia and national history purveyed by these preservationists was further biased by the idiosyncrasies of their class, culture, and period. Since the APVA was a select organization, its presentation of history, not surprisingly, overlooked the majority of past Virginians. Likewise, the tidewater and eastern sections of the state received the most attention from the preservationists. The documentation proffered by the Association's leaders, moreover, often rested upon romantic traditions and legends which, from a later perspective, often appear farfetched and specious. The racism and ethnocentrism of upper-class Virginia society, furthermore, pervaded the APVA's perspective of past and present. That perspective had been shaped and hardened by the turbulent years from 1860 to 1890 when Virginia had faced a struggle between elitist and democrat, conservative and radical, white and black. Thus, the study and preservation of history firmly reflected the issues in those battles of the present. As traditionalists gained a secure hold upon the past, its preservation became the charge of the APVA and other similar-minded groups.

While the Association's reading of history was often flawed,

it served two distinct purposes. The reputation and influence of Virginia's traditionalist leadership and culture were strengthened both in the Old Dominion and in the United States as a whole. Leading preservationists, both as individuals and APVA representatives, spearheaded Virginia's campaign which challenged New England's control over the interpretation of American history. The Old Dominion, they claimed, had been robbed of its deserved national fame by these descendants of the Pilgrims. In their rivalry with the Yankees the Virginians sometimes stretched their claims of priority and historic importance to the extreme. Other times, however, they were on the mark. The APVA and traditionalist Virginia did prove that John Smith, Jamestown, and Williamsburg had been slighted by northern writers. As the Association worked for national union and reconciliation, moreover, it did so upon the precondition that Virginia's prior and unique civilization be recognized by the nation. In the process the Old South's racism as well as its notions of states' rights and local rule received historical sanction. Many of the preservationists had keenly realized that any national recognition of these present-day issues was contingent upon the acceptance of their propriety, validity, and effectiveness in the past Old-South civilization. The past indeed had provided the prologue to the present.

The Association's reading of history also helped to strengthen traditionalist leadership and influence within the Old Dominion. After all, the gist of the APVA's Gospel of Preservation was that the past would serve the present and shape the future. The leaders of the preservation organization therefore used the preserved and memorialized past to provide historical underpinnings for first the resurgence and second the hegemony of traditionalist rule in the state. While preserving,

embellishing, and popularizing the Old Virginia Mystique, the APVA's leading orators and writers depicted the earlier society of the Old Dominion as noble, righteous, and peaceful; these characteristics became the "truth" about the earlier epoch. Yet, many of the APVA's leaders--such as Henry, Page, Joseph and Belle Bryan--had seen only the best and most aristocratic features of the Old South; they claimed, nevertheless, that their experiences and values represented the real Virginia worthy of preservation.

As these leaders strove to restore mythical qualities, they used the past to shape the present. As in the Old South when gentlemen lived for politics and community influence, the preservationists stressed the need for responsible (either elite or professional) rule. In their present age when privatism and pursuit of individual success detracted from public life, the APVA called for the new John Smiths and Patrick Henrys to step forward and bring order and progress to Virginia. Similarly, as a centralized federal government assumed more powers, these preservationists celebrated the historic success of Virginia's earlier localistic rule. Furthermore, this generation of preservationists had faced challenges from populists, blacks, and modernists; they responded with redoubled efforts to restore traditionalistic hegemony and conservative social control in the Old Dominion. While some of the Association's leaders undoubtedly were simple antiquarians intoxicated by the past, most of the prominent preservationists not only loved the past glories, but realized that the preservation of the past offered one key to control the future. The APVA's Gospel of Preservation became, therefore, conservative in philosophy, traditionalist in inspiration, elitist and paternalistic in its role models, and localistic in its orientation.

CHAPTER IV
THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND
ANTIQUITIES AND THE TRADITIONALISTS'
REAFFIRMATION OF OLD NEW ENGLAND

When William Sumner Appleton, a thirty-six year old Boston Brahmin, founded the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) in 1910, he inaugurated New England's first regional effort in historic preservation. As the SPNEA developed during its first decade, it reflected the perspectives and cultural needs of many leading Anglo-Saxon traditionalists who witnessed dramatic changes in New England. Through the SPNEA, Appleton and fellow preservationists preached a Gospel of Preservation as they protected the culture of the past in order to help shape the present. The architecture of the past, and particularly that of the colonial and revolutionary eras, became a symbol for what they thought New England presently lacked or was rapidly losing. These buildings were testaments, the preservationists claimed, to the worthiness of old-time Yankee virtues such as simplicity, family life, hard work, and community responsibility. As an antiquarian and archaeologist, Appleton also believed that the material culture of the past, and particularly that of his revered Anglo-Saxon forebears, should be preserved to illustrate the lives of earlier peoples. This philosophy of preservation and, more particularly, the methodology (to be examined in Chapter V) which Appleton developed in these first years with the SPNEA

would mold historic preservation into a modern profession.

The SPNEA was one star in a constellation of elite and traditionalist organizations which were established by upper class and influential New Englanders not only to protect their historical identity, but to set the tenor of society as well. From its first days of operation the SPNEA, led by the dynamic Appleton, won substantive acclaim. While the organization primarily appealed to the propertied classes to emulate and promote Anglo-Saxon traditionalism, preservationists also believed that history--as represented by the preserved past and its symbols--could be used to Americanize newer immigrants, to teach them acceptable values, and to limit their influence in New England's society and economy. Historic preservation, therefore, was not simply a method used to document the past, but a tool to shape the present as well. In its first decade the Society acquired seven buildings and aided in the preservation of at least two score more. It institutionalized the traditionalists' determination to protect their endangered material culture and sounded the rallying cry for similar-minded ventures elsewhere. The Gospel of Preservation, as promulgated by Appleton and his SPNEA, linked past and present, culture and society, through traditionalism. Preservationists labored, as a result, to reaffirm Yankee traditions and to reassert Anglo-Saxon cultural supremacy in the changing land.

The Response of Traditionalist Culture to Modern Change

The Anglo-Saxon, traditionalist character of New England was in jeopardy in 1910 as the immigration of Slavic and Mediterranean peoples skyrocketed, as Irish politicians came to dominate city governments such as Boston's, and as the hold of respected customs and values on society

weakened. This immigration, together with America's own mobility, led to pervasive social dislocations and profound changes in the concept of the New England community; the buildings and homes of New England's past eras suffered as a result. Appleton lamented "the casualness with which we [New Englanders] accept the marvelous heritage from the past, namely the ancestral antiquities of New England." Pointing an accusatory finger at the Irish, Italians, and other immigrants, he opined that "to these later arrivals the antiquities of New England have less meaning than to the early comers."¹ When the number of foreigners increased sharply, traditionalists rallied to protect their history and culture. The more an established New Englander "felt hemmed in by the strangers in his land," Richard Abrams explained, "the more the native tended to insist on the old standards." Some feared, as did Henry James, the loss of their Anglo-Saxon identity. Observing the immigrants on Boston Common, he wrote: "'The people before me were gross aliens to a man, and they were in serene and triumphant possession. . . . Therefore had I the vision, as filling the sky, no longer of the great Puritan "whip," the whip for the conscience and the nerves, of the local legend, but that of a huge applied sponge, a sponge saturated with the foreign mixture and passed over almost everything I remembered and might still have recovered.'"² Although some Bostonians attempted "to stir the immigrants' interest &

¹William Sumner Appleton, "New England's Antiquarian Heritage," MS. of an article which appeared in Boston Transcript, April 15, 1939, SPNEA files.

²Richard M. Abrams, Conservatism in a Progressive Era: Massachusetts Politics, 1900-1912 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 289; Henry James quoted in Geoffrey Blodgett, The Gentle Reformers: Massachusetts Democrats in the Cleveland Era (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 280.

pride in civic affairs," recounted Charles Knowles Bolton, SPNEA president, the evidence in the North End was largely "a eugenic failure." Bolton nonetheless approved of the labors of social workers such as Robert A. Woods, calling them "earnest, sane people." Believing that it required at least "two generations [for the immigrants] to grow to our standards," the SPNEA president worked primarily to ensure that "our standards" were preserved and protected in the process.³

The widespread destruction of buildings from the colonial and revolutionary periods resulted from these dramatic changes. When Americans gave up their family or ancestral homes while fleeing from the immigrants or searching for distant prosperity, more and more ancient or once fashionable structures were abandoned. Charles Eliot Norton, Appleton's mentor who was Professor of Fine Arts at Harvard, constantly regretted that fact because he considered these hereditary homes the foundation for a stable community. They represented continuity of tradition, responsible leadership, primacy of family values, and a conservative brake on the course of rapid change. Norton and Appleton were similarly interested in the medieval period of history. For Appleton the colonial period, particularly the seventeenth century, represented the medieval artistic, communal, and personal strengths which he found lacking in his own day. The buildings of this period accordingly evoked his sympathies, but they were rapidly disappearing. He estimated in 1914 that "fully one-third of

³Charles K. Bolton, "Note-Book," February 6, 1914 and April 27, 1913, Bolton Papers, MHS. While many traditionalists supported the Immigration Restriction League, neither Bolton nor Appleton expressed in their extant papers any direct support for restrictionism.

those that were standing in 1890 have disappeared."⁴ These seventeenth-century dwellings, symbolizing the qualities which had made New England great, therefore became the focal point for Appleton's preservation work.

The perspective of traditionalists such as Appleton and Bolton toward the present day reflected the troubling pace of Boston's change. The SPNEA was headquartered in The Hub and much of its traditionalist support resided there. During the late nineteenth century, and hence during the lives of many of these preservationists, Boston had been traumatically transformed from a "tightly packed seaport" to an industrial metropolis whose sprawl covered a ten-mile radius. In this process, Sam Bass Warner explained, "the old settlement of 1850 became by 1900 the principal zone of work--the industrial, commercial, and communications center of the metropolitan region." The old and sometimes historic dwellings of Boston, if they survived either natural disaster or planned demolition, became the tenements of the lower-income part of the population. Boston essentially became a city divided by class and ethnicity. As the middle and upper classes abandoned Boston's older homes for their new streetcar suburbs or the exclusive Back Bay, even Beacon Hill, the symbol of the Brahmin past, was threatened and "badly weakened in its social tone."⁵ The collective identity of Boston was shattered by this

⁴William Sumner Appleton to Celeste Bush, February 17, 1914, Thomas Lee House files, SPNEA. In 1975 one historian estimated that more than 200 seventeenth-century houses still existed in New England, quite a contrast with the less than ten extant in Virginia and Maryland; see Cary Carson, "Doing History with Material Culture," in Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. by Ian M. G. Quimby (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), p. 56. The best statement of Norton's viewpoint, and one he relayed to his Harvard students, may be found in his "The Lack of Old Homes in America," Scribner's Magazine 5 (May 1889):636-640.

⁵Sam B. Warner, Jr., Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in

residential mobility, these ethnic and class divisions, and the frantic pace of modern change. Appleton voiced the Gospel of Preservation in the belief that the protection of old-time culture could help restore that identity.

Bostonians of Anglo-Saxon heritage had been a people closely tied to their culture. As Samuel Adams Drake, a highly popular antiquarian, explained in 1900, "more perhaps than the natives of any American city Bostonians have the feeling of 'inhabitiveness and adhesiveness' abnormally developed. . . . But aside from the peculiar charm surrounding one's birthplace, common to all men, the Bostonian knows that his own is pre-eminently the historic city of America, and he feels that no small part of its world-wide renown has descended to him as his peculiar inheritance." What was most appalling, however, was "the threatened spoliation of what we lay claim to as our inalienable inheritance, our birth-right. I mean the really historic buildings of Boston and what they stand for."⁶

When Boston industrialized, its historic inner city became tenement housing for the poor, the working class, and the immigrants; this had particular consequences for the North End where, according to Rev. E. G. Porter, most of the city's historic buildings were located yet

Boston, 1870-1900, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 1, 144. These changes on Beacon Hill, Appleton's birthplace and home, resembled those described by W. Lloyd Warner when he characterized his mythical Yankee City. There the mansions "are the most important symbols of a cherished and highly prized way of life. The deepest sentiments about what a man is and what he is to others are rooted within their walls"; see his The Living and the Dead; A Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans, volume 5 in the Yankee City Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 49.

⁶ Samuel Adams Drake, Old Landmarks and Historic Personages of Boston, rev. ed., 1900, reprint (Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1970), p. v.

rarely visited by old-time Anglo-Saxons. After the SPNEA's Bolton visited the North End and its Old North Church and Paul Revere house, he noted the turnover of both population and dwellings. "A fine old wooden house facing the [Parkman] Place . . . has just been sold to two Dagos," he wrote, "and poor old Mrs. John White who has lived there for 40 years has taken to her bed for good & all."⁷ With historic Boston held by foreigners, preservationists then campaigned to save and retrieve some of the most precious symbols of their Anglo-Saxon past.

Although these inner-city neighborhoods contained some of the most historic and endangered buildings, somewhat ironically most of the SPNEA's preservation efforts would be in the smaller cities or countryside. The country ideal with its notion of a peaceful, personal, and more natural life in contrast to that of the city seemed to dominate the interest of the preservationists. Boston's South End and North End, on the other hand, were almost written off by these traditionalists. "For the middle class," Sam Bass Warner explained, "the inner area of low-income housing became an unknown and uncontrolled land. . . . Most important, the concentration in a solid two-mile area of foreign languages, poverty, sweatshops, and slum housing gave the suburban middle class a sense of hopelessness and fear."⁸ New Englanders have long idealized the rural ethic and small, local community; in its preservation of the past the SPNEA often evoked that ideal in its efforts. The SPNEA's Gospel of Preservation, therefore, was premised upon the conviction that the early Americans'

⁷Rev. Edward G. Porter, Rambles in Old Boston, New England (Boston: Cupples and Hurd, 1887), pp. vii-viii; Bolton, "Note-Book," May 21, 1914, Bolton Papers, MHS.

⁸Warner, Streetcar Suburbs, p. 162.

community, personal ethics, and natural existence had lessons to offer the present.

The first years of the twentieth century in Massachusetts coincided with the conservative reform movement of progressivism. The goal of this reform, claimed Richard Hofstadter, was "the formation of a responsible elite, which was to take charge of the popular impulse toward change and direct it into moderate and, as they would have said, 'constructive' channels." This "'reform element' in Massachusetts," Richard Abrams concluded, "came mostly from the business and professional classes, especially from among the older families. Its members derived directly from the Mugwumps." Highly educated and socially prominent the mugwumps preached a conservative philosophy which was based upon an enlightened rule by the elite, responsible and honest government, and the older individualistic values of early America. Considering themselves "intellectually, socially, and ethnically outnumbered" by the lower-class masses, they lamented the decline of social standards in New England and strove to regenerate the older traditions.⁹ Like Charles Eliot Norton, mugwumps feared that democracy would work "'ignobly, ignorantly, brutally'" and that "'the better elements of social life, of human nature, were [not] growing and flourishing in proportion to the baser.'" ¹⁰ As they upheld conservatism, adherence to tradition, and elite rule, the mugwumps condemned both the apathy of some Brahmins and the dealings of Irish machine

⁹Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 163-164; Abrams, Conservatism in a Progressive Era, p. 143; Blodgett, The Gentle Reformers, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰Norton quoted in Blodgett, The Gentle Reformers, p. 33. It was commonly believed that the genteel population faced extinction because its birthrate declined while that of the immigrants and masses increased.

politicians. The SPNEA's leaders, particularly Appleton and Bolton, shared this mugwump philosophy and strove to preserve and protect the traditions which buttressed their conception of the past.

The mugwumps considered the Boston mayoral election of North End ward-boss John F. Fitzgerald in 1905 to be a serious challenge to their traditional standards and notions of government and leadership. In fact the Good Government Association's historian claimed that "'Old Boston . . . became a thing of the past'" with his victory. Fitzgerald's public stance often conflicted with that of the Brahmin reformers. "Holding them up as more concerned with thrift and aesthetics than with the public welfare," Abrams explained, "the Mayor teasingly proposed building a row of houses on the river side of the fashionable Beacon Street residences and a new City Hall on the site of the Botanic Gardens." Fitzgerald shrewdly realized that the very symbols of the Brahmin past--the gardens representing their rural ideal and Beacon Street their domestic peace and social leadership--were the prized possessions of the traditionalist upper classes.¹¹

Fitzgerald's successor, the populist politician James Michael Curley, antagonized the Brahmins even more. He always remembered that these Back Bay and Beacon Hill mansions or "'castles'" were "the homes of the 'barons who exploited Irish labor.'" Throughout his political tenure he "harbored class resentment as well as a consciousness of ethnic and religious

¹¹Abrams, Conservatism in a Progressive Era, pp. 146, 147. In W. Lloyd Warner's mythical Yankee City the Irish machine mayor similarly threatened the mansions on Hill Street and desecrated one by demolishing it for a filling station. "Not only did he violate the house and threaten the values attached to [it] . . . as well as old-family sentiment, but he injured and threatened the deeper unconscious emotions felt for the protected place"; see his The Living and the Dead, p. 49.

persecution." Bolton's reaction probably typified the traditionalists' attitude towards Mayor Curley: "Surely ridiculous rulers of a million people anywhere but in a democracy run mad." Throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century Appleton had advocated, moreover, the introduction of the Hare Plan's single transferable vote. He hoped to "bring in 'a higher class of elected officials'" than the Curley types elected by a democracy which he failed to understand.¹² This mugwump-machine clash typified profound difficulties in the governance of Boston. Any attempt to build a Protestant-Catholic coalition, Sam B. Warner observed, would be invariably hampered by the WASP "drive for cultural dominance." "Since Puritan times generations of Bostonians have believed that a civic community should . . . promote and extend the dominant culture of the city."¹³ The struggle on a larger scale, therefore, concerned the nature of that dominant culture; historic preservationists were determined that it should be one based upon their Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

An earlier generation of historians has assumed that since the Brahmins passionately studied their past it must have been a form of escapism from their present day. Richard Hofstadter, for example, concluded that the creation of a large number of ancestral, patriotic, and historic societies was a reaction against the rise of parvenus and the challenges of immigrants. Labeling this as part of a "status revolution,"

¹²Curry quoted in James R. Green and Hugh Carter Donahue, Boston's Workers: A Labor History (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1979), p. 80; Bolton, "Note-Book," February 23, 1914, Bolton Papers, MHS; Appleton to Harrison Gray Otis, April 14, 1924, Otis House files, SPNEA.

¹³Warner, Streetcar Suburbs, pp. xii-xiii. The author added that Boston never had a "truly civic community; instead, it has been a gathering of conforming and nonconforming residents." See also, Abrams, Conservatism in a Progressive Era, p. 133.

he conjectured that it "suggests that many old-family Americans, who were losing status in the present may have found satisfying compensation in turning to family glories of the past." Arthur Mann likewise hypothesized that the descendants of the Puritans in Boston were "resigned to losing power to the newer immigrant groups, [and] turned to a different past: to the past of their English forebears and merchant grandfathers, from which they excluded the new arrivals."¹⁴ The gentlemen reformers, Brahmin antiquarians, and modern patriots, according to these two theorists, were cut off from the present, resentful of the wealthy parvenus, and, like an ostrich, escaped to the comforts of their proud past.

On the contrary, the traditionalist upper and middle classes used the past as a prop for the regeneration of Anglo-Saxon, conservative hegemony in the present. Although the Brahmins had certainly lost important ground in the realm of political leadership to the immigrants, especially in the cities, they resolutely reasserted their grip over the regional economy and culture. As the "sons of merchants and industrialists," Gabriel Kolko maintained, they "helped shape cultural and economic values" in New England. The Brahmins and their extended families, moreover, dominated both the economic and social elite and its institutional infrastructure.¹⁵ Although very willing to absorb newer families of

¹⁴Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, p. 139; Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age: Social Reform in Boston, 1880-1900 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954), p. 237.

¹⁵Gabriel Kolko, "Brahmins and Business, 1870-1914: A Hypothesis on the Social Basis of Success in American History," in The Critical Spirit: Essays in Honor of Herbert Marcuse, ed. by Kurt H. Wolff and Barrington Moore, Jr. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 352. The term "Brahmin," according to Ronald Story, "meant the rich and well-born as well as the cultivated; [it] was used interchangeably with 'upper class'; and was a sign, accordingly, of distinctiveness as well as attainment, the achievement of a degree of security, cultivation, and arrogance that struck

wealth and abilities, the traditionalist leadership expected these arrivistes to acknowledge not only the Brahmin's high standing, but their respected traditions and customs as well. Here the role of the SPNEA comes into perspective. As one of many private organizations and foundations created by the Brahmins, it endeavored to cultivate an appreciation for the colonial and revolutionary eras in the leadership orders, both established and rising.

The goals of the SPNEA, therefore, were the preservation of the symbols of the past and the protection of Anglo-Saxon traditionalism in a changing New England. The dominant culture of New England has long expanded through accretion in order to absorb new elements, E. Digby Baltzell explained, but its continuity and integrity nonetheless has been maintained. Comparing this traditionalist culture to a mother-wine, Samuel Eliot Morison noted that "the wine of New England is not a series of successive vintages, each distinct from the other, like the wines of France; it is more like the mother-wine in those great casks of port and sherry that one sees in the bodegas of Portugal and Spain, from which a certain amount is drawn off every year, and replaced by an equal volume of the new. Thus the change is gradual, and the mother wine of 1656 still gives bouquet and flavor to what is drawn in 1956."¹⁶ For Appleton and the

observers as noteworthy, if not unique." Story also noted that the term "elite" signifies "not simply the top people of any particular group (which is a reasonable and common usage) but rather what came before the class, i.e., the economically low-grade, territorially disparate, culturally unfinished yet aspiring elements in process of becoming an upper class"; see his The Forging of an Aristocracy: Harvard & the Boston Upper Class, 1800-1870 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1980), pp. xii, xiii.

¹⁶Samuel E. Morison quoted in E. Digby Baltzell, Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia: Two Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Class Authority and Leadership (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), pp. 7-8.

SPNEA the mother-wine was the material culture of the colonial and revolutionary eras. If it was preserved and perpetuated, according to this gospel, it would be steadily imbibed and would provide the virtues, ideals, and values which the modern world lacked.

One tradition which was preserved through many of the SPNEA's properties was the idea that class authority assured a stable society. Three types of authority, according to Weber's sociological model, generally have competed for dominance in a society: the traditional or class authority, bureaucratic authority, and charismatic authority. The experience of Boston, as Baltzell interpreted it, was characterized by "the institutionalization of class authority and leadership" as "a countervailing force against the stultifying force of bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the unstable force of charisma, on the other."¹⁷ In the context of the SPNEA's formative years, therefore, bureaucratic authority was the Irish machine government, the charismatic leader was James Michael Curley, and the class authority was traditionalist, Brahmin leadership. When the SPNEA preserved the homes of men such as John Cooper, Samuel Fowler, and Harrison Gray Otis, it accented the point that these trusted community leaders were not simply affluent and high standing, but responsible and effective in government as well.

The tradition of class authority, however, necessitated that the upper class and elite groups continually reaffirm their responsibility and charge in governance. While traditionalists were frustrated by the successes of Fitzgerald and Curley and sometimes concentrated on their own economic supremacy, many Brahmins countered that the leadership tradition must be

¹⁷ Baltzell, Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia, p. 23.

regenerated with both established and arriviste elites. As Baltzell explained in the context of Boston, "when . . . a society is marked by the ideals of hierarchy, class authority, and aristocratic social cohesion (Puritanism), ambitious men, both natural and sociological aristocrats, men of inherited position and those of achieved position, will tend to be driven to accomplishment and fame and less likely to rest on power or privilege alone." Traditionalists accordingly strove to instill the notions of class leadership and noblesse oblige into an upper class which had assimilated newer elements. In fact Richard Abrams noted, "the only distinct class sentiment" in Massachusetts, outside of the Left, "emanated from the dominant classes themselves." Since this upper class "tended to identify with wealth and power of all vintages," the most traditionalistic elements within it, such as the SPNEA leadership, sought to reaffirm these older values and customs.¹⁸

Upper-class solidarity was maintained through a cluster of institutions, including the SPNEA, which were created largely by Harvard men throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "This mature institutional constellation provided the Boston upper class with an interesting twofold staying power," Ronald Story explained. "One lay in its capacity to absorb and integrate parvenue families," and the second to make "the accommodation--cooptation--more certain and secure." Besides the acculturation and assimilation of newer families, a further purpose of these institutions, Story added, was "to provide their patrons with a sense of stability and order and to preserve culture and philanthropy from the

¹⁸Baltzell, Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia, p. 28; Abrams, Conservatism in a Progressive Era, pp. 162, 163. See also Gabriel Kolko, The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916 (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 284.

excessive incursions of the populace. . . . Institutional consciousness seemed thus coextensive with Brahminism."¹⁹ Although the SPNEA was privately organized by the upper classes and reflected the concerns of the more propertied groups, it also sought the support of others who upheld traditional culture. The gospel voiced by these preservationists stressed the need to restore the old-time Puritan community where rich and poor had been held together in peace and order.

The SPNEA, therefore, was part of a Brahmin cultural offensive, waged through private organizations to control the modern challenges and preserve the Anglo-Saxon identity. Like the mugwumps who "tended to look to New England's history for literary, cultural, and political models and for examples of moral idealism," these preservationists expected other New Englanders, including the new immigrants, to emulate their Puritan and Yankee forefathers; they became particularly "rankled that the newcomers should look to their homeland rather than to the Yankee past for patriotic inspiration."²⁰ If others were to study and learn from history, then the Puritan and Yankee forefathers should become, preservationists demanded, the focus of attention. It must be learned, they reiterated, that New England's strength had been built upon rural life, small and close-knit communities, deferential democracy, and the Protestant work ethic. What meaning these particular qualities had for a modern New

¹⁹ Story, The Forging of an Aristocracy, pp. 177, 178-179. The author noted that these private institutions were created in waves; one wave, outside of the chronological bounds of his study yet well within its interpretation, was the formation of historical and patriotic societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

²⁰ Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, p. 139; Blodgett, The Gentle Reformers, p. 34; Barbara Miller Solomon, "The Anglo-Saxon Cult," in Intellectual History in America, vol. 2, ed. by Cushing Strout (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), p. 36.

England where cities and factories had sharply divided the population by class and ethnicity was quite problematic. The Brahmins' control of the past, however, would strengthen their grip on the present. Although some critics felt that the old values and way of life had become outdated, the Brahmin traditionalists realized that their present standing, identity, and influence depended in part upon the recognition of their illustrious past.

Architecture, and particularly that of the colonial period, became the central symbol and most tangible representation of the historic order which modern-day Brahmins and their organizations idealized. For members of the arts and crafts movement it symbolized sound craftsmanship, the artisan's pride in and identity with his work, and the medieval community where morality and aesthetics had been one. For the ancestral societies the preserved buildings represented their family forefathers, their forebears' skill and wisdom, and the claim to priority which passed through the subsequent years to their own hands. The patriotic societies, on the other hand, preserved old buildings which represented the courage, selflessness, and resolve which earlier patriots had shown and which modern patriots hoped to emulate in the struggles against newer enemies. Whether preservationists came from the arts and crafts movement, the patriotic or ancestral societies, or historical organizations, they believed that respected traditions--symbolized through the material culture of the past--held the key to the future. At the same time, new building construction reflected colonial-era designs. The Colonial Revival, a style associated with what was thought to be the pure past, became very popular in the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²¹ Traditionalists throughout New England turned to the colonial past, partly because of disillusionment with the troubles of the present, but mostly because of the belief that colonial traditions and values should become the norms for modern development.

The SPNEA's formation in 1910, therefore, was part of a reaction against modern challenges to the role of traditionalism in American culture. Brahmin society, and especially its more traditionalist members like Appleton, considered its own class and cultural interests to be contrary to the changes associated with democratic mass politics, trades unionism, and the modern value system. Brahmins actually misjudged these changes and assumed that they were an automatic decline from the standards of honest government, hard work, and a firm moralism which they attributed to their colonial forebears. Traditionalists like Appleton then voiced the Gospel of Preservation and the plea not simply to preserve the symbols of the past, but to perpetuate and promote traditional values as well. Directing his message primarily to the traditionalists of New England, a group which still held predominance, he argued that past and present were interconnected. The moral republic of their ancestors,

²¹ Many antiquarians, however, were disappointed because the so-called Colonial Revival was based more upon the Georgian designs of the relatively affluent eighteenth century, rather than the simpler colonial style of the seventeenth century. As a result, the public perceived the colonial era to have been one of elegance and grace, not simplicity and privitude. Ralph Adams Cram, prominent architect and SPNEA trustee, however, applauded the return to American designs in our architecture. The years during which the Greek, Roman, Renaissance, and French Empire styles had flourished here, he claimed, had been "'dark ages'" and had placed American architecture at a lower level than "perhaps ever in the history of human civilization"; see his "Architecture," in Fifty Years of Boston: A Memorial Volume, compiled by the Subcommittee on Memorial History of the Boston Tercentenary Committee (Boston: n.p., 1932), p. 340.

built upon a deferential democracy and enlightened leadership, offered a viable model for the twentieth century. Historic preservation involved, as a result, not simply the protection of timber and stone, but most importantly the preservation of past traditions and values as reified through the buildings of the colonial and revolutionary periods.

Appleton and his Imprint upon the SPNEA

Throughout the period of this study the SPNEA bore the distinctive stamp of its founder, promoter, and principal leader, William Sumner Appleton (1874-1947). Born into the Brahmin caste and reared in the elite traditions defined by Beacon Street, Harvard, and Boston's select associations, Appleton made historic preservation his life's work and benefaction. While the SPNEA enlisted the efforts of many prominent individuals, none surpassed that of Appleton in influence; in fact, some of his associates have said that Appleton was the SPNEA. Since the SPNEA's Gospel of Preservation reflected his philosophy and interests, his life prior to 1910 became the wellsprings for the organization.

The Appletons were undoubtedly one of the most prominent New England families; this "First Family of Boston" traced its lineage to Samuel Appleton who had settled in Ipswich in 1636. The founder of the SPNEA was born at 39 Beacon Street, one of Boston's finest bow-fronted houses which had been built by his grandfather Nathan Appleton in 1816. Nathan's career, first as textile magnate and then as public servant, became a model for the family; he had been noted for, according to the Dictionary of American Biography, his generous philanthropy, deep religious values, and community spirit. Nathan's son, Thomas Gold Appleton, became the dean of Boston's literary society, while another son, William

Sumner Appleton (1840-1903), father of the SPNEA's founder, became a distinguished antiquarian known for his allegiance to Boston's elite societies. "The Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Athenaeum and the Bostonian Society," claimed one biographer, "could hardly have gotten along without William Sumner Appleton." Acquiring the emblems of elite status, he graduated from Harvard (he even designed the arms and seals of the college), purchased a pew at King's Chapel, and raised a family--three daughters and one son--in Boston's elite traditions.²²

Thirty-nine Beacon Street, designed by the illustrious architect Charles Bulfinch, provided an aristocratic setting around which William Sumner Appleton, Junior, developed his tastes. As one long-time associate, Bertram K. Little, put it, "the borning and living in that house had considerable other influence [on him], other than his interest in art and architecture." In the late 1880s, however, when Beacon Hill's social tone was weakening as a result of residential flight in the face of commerce and immigration, his father sold the house and the entire family went to Europe in 1887 for more than a year. Upon his return from Europe he attended boarding school at prestigious St. Paul's in

²²For the Appleton's First Family status, see Baltzell, Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia, Table A-3, p. 461; for Nathan Appleton, see Dictionary of American Biography vol. 1, ed. by Allen Johnson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), pp. 330-332. The two William Sumner Appletons rarely used the titles Senior and Junior, probably because the father died when the son, known usually as Sumner, was only twenty-nine. For Appleton Senior, see Louise H. Tharp, The Appletons of Beacon Hill (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973), p. 315, and Charles C. Smith, Memoir of William Sumner Appleton, A.M. (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son, 1903). Tharp's study, for unknown reasons, virtually ignores Appleton Junior.

Concord, New Hampshire and then entered Harvard in 1892.²³

The Harvard years refined Appleton's sense of elitism, his appreciation of art, and his notions of community responsibility. Besides inculcating the rural ideal and the work ethic, Ronald Story observed, Harvard's instruction "was always tinged with ideology . . . stressing obligation to society, skepticism of democracy, and above all, stability." The college further stressed "the value of responsibility . . . to clan, peerage, and institution." Since the college's function was to train the new elite, it had very close ties with the business world, as well as with the reform movement. According to Geoffrey Blodgett, "Harvard was a seminal source for the whole cluster of ideals that gave Mugwumpery its drive" including "a certainty of moral as well as intellectual superiority over the surrounding populace" and "a sense of equivalent duty."²⁴ In these years, therefore, Harvard infused into its students a strong class identity, a sense of tradition, and the notion of noblesse oblige.

At Harvard Appleton studied under some of the finest scholars of his day: Barrett Wendell in literature, William James and George Santayana in philosophy, and Albert B. Hart and Edward Channing in history.

²³Bertram K. Little to Clifford Lord, September 28, 1964, Appleton file, SPNEA. Charles F. McKim, soon to become one of America's most famed architects, married into the Appleton family and even established a small office at 39 Beacon Street; see Douglas S. Tucci, Built in Boston: City and Suburb, 1800-1950 (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1978), p. 136. "Notes for Miss Curtis," dictated by William Sumner Appleton to E. F. Addison, n.d., in Appleton file, SPNEA; for Beacon Hill, see Warner, Streetcar Suburbs, p. 144; for a description of the role of St. Paul's, see E. Digby Baltzell, The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy & Caste in America (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 127.

²⁴Story, The Forging of an Aristocracy, pp. 163-164, 181; Blodgett, Gentle Reformers, pp. 20-21.

As a freshman, he admitted some thirty years later, his "ignorance of old New England architecture was as great as anyone's very well could be."²⁵ Yet that ignorance of architecture changed when Appleton studied under Charles Eliot Norton, Professor of Fine Arts, in both his junior and senior years. Considering Appleton's later career, his philosophies of preservation and archaeology, and his preference for early colonial craftsmanship, the influences of Norton were profound upon Appleton.

Charles Eliot Norton inculcated the principles which Appleton would later incorporate into the SPNEA's Gospel of Preservation. As a close friend of John Ruskin, Norton shared his beliefs that there was an "intimate relation between art and life" and that the fine arts were "an expression of the spirit of past ages." In Fine Arts 3 and 4, courses for which Appleton studied, Norton's "lectures from first to last . . . emphasized the ethical and social implications of the fine arts." Important for Appleton's later career, the professor also stressed the necessity of archaeological research in restoration work. Philosophically, Norton moreover maintained that "the history of the fine arts should always be related to the history of civilization; that monuments should be interpreted as expressions of the peculiar genius of the people who produced them; [and] that fundamental principles of design should be emphasized as a basis for aesthetic judgments."²⁶

²⁵ Appleton to Nathaniel Jackson, July 8, 1920, Jackson House file, SPNEA.

²⁶ George H. Chase, "The Fine Arts 1874-1919," in The Development of Harvard University: Since the Inauguration of President Eliot, 1869-1930, ed. by Samuel Eliot Morison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), pp. 130, 131, 133. See also "William Sumner Appleton, A.B. 1896," a typescript of his coursework and professors, prepared by Gail Westhafer for this author and in his possession.

Important for Appleton's development were Norton's antimodernism, his praise for the medieval period, and his advocacy of the arts and crafts movement. Like Ruskin, the Harvard professor extolled the medieval spirit, especially when concerning its artisans who had been skilled in their crafts, religious in their faith, and loyal to their community. The artistry of the Renaissance, he claimed on the other hand, revealed a decadence in morality and society. "In Norton's view," explained Jackson Lears, "the Renaissance in Italy--like his own post-Civil War era in America--marked 'a gilded not a golden age.' Both periods showed the destruction of a virtuous community by the obsession with private gain and by the decline of any unifying belief system." The Gilded Age's architecture, Norton claimed, lacked order and form in its design and was dominated by "'the desire for ornamentation and specious originality.'"²⁷ This strong streak of antimodernism led him, as a result, to glorify the medieval community and its workers while condemning modern-day unions and democracy. Norton made a deep impression upon most of his students, including Appleton who later reiterated his mentor's preference for the rugged artistry of America's colonial period over that of the Georgian, or classically influenced, designs. Appleton moreover linked aesthetics and morality in his estimation of the past and his reaction to the present. Like Norton, the SPNEA's foremost preservationist observed a decline in the modern community, morality, and artistry.

After his graduation in 1896 and another European excursion, Appleton

²⁷T. J. Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. 66. Appleton kept numerous scrapbooks detailing his developing interests while at Harvard, but no record indicates their whereabouts.

returned to New England to find his life's profession. It was fourteen years before he would establish the SPNEA, however, and in the interim he tried his hand as a businessman selling real estate and as a Harvard graduate student studying such diverse fields as farming, mining, and architecture. Success, however, was hard to find, as he invariably failed in these efforts. The pressure brought on by selling real estate led to what he called a "nervous breakdown" and a slow, forced recuperation.²⁸ After his father's death in 1903 Appleton was able to live comfortably on the annuity of his inheritance and this led one later associate to accuse him of belonging to the "leisure class." The rural ideal led him to enroll in Harvard's Bussey Institution in hopes of learning how to run the nearby family farm. After losing interest in farming he even enrolled in, but did not attend, mining classes at Harvard. Finally he registered for Denman Ross's class, "Theory of Pure Design: Harmony, Rhythm, and Balance," in the Graduate School of Architecture. Although he thorough enjoyed his course-related ramblings through Cambridge and other ancient towns, his class performance, as he noted in his diary, was very poor.²⁹ With a more refined taste for architecture he then made his

²⁸Tension and a serious astigmatism led to his malady; see his autobiographical sketch, draft copy, n.d., Appleton file, SPNEA. Appleton's health, moreover, was often frail; it is ironic that what interested him most as a preservationist was the hearty, vigorous style of life in the early colonial era. Nervous problems, often diagnosed as neurasthenia, were quite common in the early twentieth century. According to Stow Persons, "the causes of nervousness were the pressures of modern civilized living encountered by frail types under the least favorable environmental conditions"; see his Decline of American Gentility (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 292.

²⁹George Dudley Seymour to Appleton, March 7, 1914, Seymour file, SPNEA; Appleton's diary entries included an admission that he "killed" an examination in January, and then did "very poorly" on the following test in April; see "A Line a Day," January 24, and April 3, 1907, SPNEA.

third European tour and visited many museums and restoration projects, including medieval cathedrals and dwellings. Upon his return to Boston Appleton even ventured into designing plans for Brookline's park system.³⁰

What turned Appleton towards historic preservation was his work in the Sons of the Revolution and the crusade which began in 1905 to preserve the Paul Revere house in Boston's North End. As the only extant seventeenth-century house in Boston and a prime example revealing medieval influences, the Revere house had long been a focus of attention for antiquarians. While the North End once had been the home of Boston's finest families and remained the most historic section of the city, in 1905 it was an Italian neighborhood and many Proper Bostonians feared coming near. Samuel Adams Drake, a popular antiquarian author, described the area round the Revere home as one of cheap tenements. It was "where pure air is indeed a luxury. Pah! the atmosphere is actually thick with the vile odors of garlic and onions--of macaroni and lazzaroni. The dirty tenements swarm with greasy voluble Italians. . . . One can scarce hear the sound of his own English mother-tongue from one end of the square to the other; and finally (can we believe the evidence of our own eyes?), here is good Father Taylor's old brick Bethel turned into a Catholic chapel!"³¹

When the Revere house was threatened with demolition in order to build more tenements, the Brahmins united with other leaders to launch a

³⁰ Descriptions of his European trip may be found in his "A Line a Day," March 16-July 9, 1909, SPNEA; the Brookline park project is noted in "A Line a Day," October 11, 1909, Appleton had worked earlier in 1906 promoting a Metropolitan Back Bay Basin scheme; see "A Line a Day," January 16, 1906, SPNEA.

³¹ Samuel Adams Drake, Our Colonial Homes (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1893), p. 19.

preservation drive. A distinguished citizens' committee, including the governor, lieutenant governor, and mayor, formed the Paul Revere Memorial Association (PRMA). Appleton served as secretary of the PRMA and, according to one newspaper, was "the architect of the Association" and its principal workhorse. Arguing that the restored Revere house would become a mecca for tourists, Appleton also claimed that "'as a patriotic memorial it would be of no less value. Situated as it is, in the middle of our foreign quarter, it will be a constant incentive to patriotic citizenship and the study of our national history.'"³² The PRMA's president, Lieutenant Governor Curtis Guild, Jr., likewise voiced the hope that the new immigrants would conform to traditional New England standards. The restored Revere house, he predicted, "will serve as a daily lesson to the youth of that district in Massachusetts' ideals of loyalty, simplicity and civic pride." Since Revere himself once had been an immigrant, he continued, the preservation of this shrine would be "a reminder to new citizens of the service due from them and from their children to the Commonwealth."³³ As the PRMA used the past, its historic preservation became

³²"Paul Revere Memorial," unidentified newspaper, n.d., Revere Scrapbook, SPNEA. The object of the PRMA, according to Article 2 of its charter, was to shape the present by using the past: "The purpose of this Association is the prosecution of antiquarian and historical interests, with especial consideration to honor the memory of the patriot, Paul Revere, to the end that patriotism, philanthropy, civic virtue and pride may be publicly fostered, and the growth of the community may be educated in respect thereto"; "By-Laws of the Paul Revere Memorial Association," in Revere House file, SPNEA. Appleton incorporated the PRMA "so as to avoid taxation" and wanted the house to become a shrine and museum; see his form letter to "Dear Sir," February 25, 1907, in Revere Scrapbook, SPNEA.

³³Curtis Guild, Jr., Circular Letter, November 29, 1907, in Revere Scrapbook, SPNEA. Paul Revere obviously meant many things to many people; The Boston Herald even pictured him as an astute businessman whose warning should now "'spread the alarm' that should wake the nation from its lethargy in regard to the trusts"; see "Paul Revere the Business Man," the Boston Herald, April 15, 1906, in Revere Scrapbook, SPNEA.

a device to ensure Anglo-conformity, to inculcate patriotism, and to remind the immigrants that simplicity (that is, poverty) was a virtue, not an excuse for class conflict.

During his years as secretary of the PRMA Appleton became involved in other preservation efforts, including a campaign, which required his lobbying at the legislature and governor's office, first to prevent any changes in the Old State House and then to properly restore that Bulfinch-designed capitol. As a vice president of the Sons of the Revolution, and as a member and for three years chairman of the Joint Advisory Committee on Cooperation in Patriotic Work, his interests turned to the preservation of Lexington and Concord and particularly the memorials associated with the Revolutionary War, such as the Old Belfry and the Jonathan Harrington house. He visited the latter house repeatedly in December of 1909, sometimes with architect Joseph Chandler and Colonial Dames leader, Edith G. Wendell, as it was being restored by apparently insensitive hands.³⁴

Believing that the Harrington house "should be saved as it is" rather than being refitted for modern comforts, Appleton claimed that the house symbolized the battle of April 19th and Jonathan Harrington, a Minuteman, who gave his life in that encounter. As "one of the most inspiring [episodes] in the history" of the Revolution, he wrote, "the existence of the unaltered Harrington House has been the strongest reminder of the owner's heroism sacrifice, and devotion to duty." While the house was being remodeled, he warned that "the material alterations which the house is at this moment undergoing cannot fail to lessen the fact

³⁴For the Old State House, see Appleton, "A Line a Day," April 6 and June 14, 15, 1906, and March 8, 1907, and November 16, 1908, SPNEA; for the Joint Advisory Committee, see "A Line a Day," January 6, 1909 and March 7, 1910, SPNEA.

[of Harrington's sacrifice] provided by a visit to the battle field, and the loss will be permanent in that no reconstruction is likely ever to give us back what we are losing."³⁵ The Harrington house represented for Appleton, therefore, patriotic duty and community service; these qualities were being diminished, in the remodeling of the house and in society as well, by self-serving individuals who were concerned only with comfort and private gain.

Appleton was obviously angered and, as he claimed, "the very material alteration" of the Harrington house "precipitated the formation" of the SPNEA. Knowing that the patriotic and ancestral societies had limited abilities for the preservation of historic properties, he consulted with Charles K. Bolton, librarian of Boston's Athenaeum, in December of 1909 about creating an organization which could act quickly and singularly to protect such memorials as the Harrington house.³⁶ The SPNEA's subsequent creation actually represented a synthesis of his past experiences: his training under Norton which led him to admire the medieval-like simplicity and purity of colonial architecture, his work with the PRMA and patriotic societies, and his Brahmin upbringing which taught him to respect traditionalist culture, protect his class, and serve what he perceived to be his community's interests. The Gospel of Preservation which he subsequently voiced reflected these experiences in his background; the SPNEA was molded likewise by the imprint of William Sumner Appleton.

³⁵ Appleton, "A Line a Day," December 22, 1909, SPNEA; Appleton to Mrs. Carolie P. Heath, May 5, 1910, DAR file, SPNEA.

³⁶ Appleton to Mrs. Caroline P. Heath, May 5, 1910, DAR file, SPNEA; Appleton, "A Line a Day," December 28, 1909, SPNEA.

The Founding of the SPNEA

When the SPNEA was established in 1910 it was a unique effort in American historic preservation because of its regional commitment and primary accent on architecture. Believing that buildings symbolized the lives and values of earlier times, Appleton knew that his preservation efforts would run up against groups who cared little for that past. They were not only the commercial classes, many of whom were fellow Harvardians or clubmen and whose financial interest revolved around land values and development, but also the lower-class residents who sometimes occupied the more ancient and often run-down structures. Yet, when he formed the SPNEA and enlisted allies, Appleton directed his primary appeal to the upper classes with whom he had always associated, whether in the segregated halls of St. Paul's and Harvard or the elite men's clubs. His organization would be led by similar-minded men and women who likewise defined their interests as those of New England. Support for historic preservation, and the implicit power which it gave to define just what was important in the past, would give them, they hoped, the upper hand in shaping the identity of and the priorities for the whole of New England. As with the leaders of the past, modern-day traditionalists felt duty bound to impart to society the proper values and respect for New England's heritage.

Appleton realized that earlier preservation efforts in New England had often failed in their tasks. From his first days with the SPNEA he appeared particularly obsessed by the precedent of the Hancock house and he greatly regretted the public callousness and governmental indifference which had been shown towards this symbol of the colonial past. Although

offered to the city as a gift, the Beacon Street mansion was demolished during the Civil War in spite of the fact that it was then considered one of the finest pieces of architecture in the country. Appleton devoted the cover story of the SPNEA's first Bulletin to the Hancock house and called its destruction "a classic in the annals of vandalism." The incident aroused so much emotion in him, in fact, that a reporter mistakenly assumed that the preservationist had witnessed its demise personally. "Seemingly unable to prevent it," the reporter wrote, "Mr. Appleton had seen the beautiful colonial home of John Hancock demolished." For traditionalist Brahmins the Hancock home represented their prized values and historical identity. The house "taught history," Samuel Adams Drake explained. "It awakened patriotic aspirations; it stimulated honest endeavor."³⁷ Since the city and state governments had refused such a gift, Appleton cast doubt on the abilities of any government to carry out the task of historic preservation.

As Appleton illustrated the Hancock house episode, he claimed that the public of the nineteenth century had been "wholly lacking" in "an appreciation of old buildings." Even the preservation of a building such as the "Old Indian House" of Deerfield, the last home associated with the famed 1704 Indian massacre, then seemed "too ambitious a project for serious

³⁷ [William Sumner Appleton], "The Home of John Hancock, Beacon Street, Boston," Bulletin of the SPNEA 1 (May 1910):1 (hereafter referred to as the Bulletin); see also Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation of Old Buildings in New England," Art and Archaeology 3 (May-June 1919):143-144 (hereafter referred to as "Destruction and Preservation"); Carl Greenleaf Beede, "Has a Dozen Houses, Wants More," The Christian Science Monitor, November 27, 1926; Drake, Our Colonial Homes, p. 5. One of Appleton's uncles, probably Thomas Gold Appleton, "came within an ace of securing the place for his home" but "was discouraged by the cost" and only "secured the entire staircase"; W. S. Appleton to Henry C. Mercer, June 19, 1922, Bucks County Pennsylvania file, SPNEA. Appleton later acquired this staircase and reerected it in his country house.

consideration, although the owner offered to sell it for a nominal sum for preservation as a memorial of the past." Those select buildings which were preserved at that time, Charles B. Hosmer noted, were associated with the Revolution, local pride, or some distinguished ancestor. The motivations for historic preservation included "ancestor worship, . . . patriotic inspiration, . . . [and] a recognition of the hardships endured by sturdy ancestral pioneers." Yet the efforts of these few nineteenth-century preservationists failed to keep pace with the wholesale demolition, alteration, and destruction of historic structures. An earlier preservation organization which influenced Appleton was the APVA and he had joined it around 1907. His SPNEA, in fact, derived its name from that Association, an imitation which he later considered "a great mistake" because the name was too long to grasp easily.³⁸ Unlike the APVA which, by the appearance of the first Year Book sent to him, was most involved with tablets, memorials, graveyards, and only lastly buildings, Appleton was determined from the start that architecture would be the priority of his preservation efforts.

European historic preservation movements likewise influenced the organization and development of the SPNEA. In Appleton's three visits to the continent his interests in medieval architecture and architectural restoration, both of which had been stimulated by Norton, had matured and intensified. Besides admiring French restoration work, Appleton made particular mention of the English National Trust and the Society for the

³⁸ Appleton to Heloise Meyer, May 18, 1922, Meyer file, SPNEA; Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," pp. 138-139; Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), pp. 102-103; for the reference to the SPNEA's name, see Appleton to Mrs. C. A. Gosney, July 6, 1939, North Carolina Society for Preservation file, SPNEA.

Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). Some years later, Appleton admitted that the SPNEA "seems to be following somewhat in the footsteps of the English National Trust." Yet, an even stronger influence was the SPAB--founded by John Ruskin, Norton's close associate--which vigorously argued for the preservation of historic properties and against their restoration. According to his friend Bertram K. Little, Appleton "talked eagerly about European concepts of preservation" and in an eclectic manner learned from their efforts.³⁹

Unlike many European preservation projects, however, Appleton insisted that private organizations, not governmental ones, undertake historic preservation. Not only had Brahmin philanthropy been long channelled through its own organizations, but most importantly, governmental organizations could not be trusted with a subject as sensitive and vital to the Brahmins' sense of identity as was history. Writing in Art and Archaeology, he claimed that:

action by the nation or the states is in America peculiarly difficult of achievement and for some reasons not to be desired. That part of the public capable of appreciating a handsome building for the sake of its artistic merit, is small indeed, and the chance of obtaining support from the public treasury is too negligible to notice. . . . On the other hand, even if these were not the case, our political system with its almost total lack of responsibility, as well as its widespread tendency to the spoils system, makes public action extremely dangerous. There can be no doubt but that for many years, at least, efficient action looking to the preservation of our best architecture must depend for its support on private initiative.⁴⁰

³⁹William Sumner Appleton, "Preserving the Antiquities of New England," typescript, n.d., Appleton file, SPNEA; Little quoted in Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 257. Ronald Story contended that the Brahmins' "mimicry" of English institutions was "so omnipresent and the appreciation of England so forthright" that it "only underscores the class ideal lurking beneath the surface of elite institutionalism"; see his The Forging of an Aristocracy, p. 166.

⁴⁰Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," p. 179.

The SPNEA, Appleton wrote in the premier issue of the Bulletin, would have as "its exclusive object" the preservation of antiquities. Since special societies, such as the PRMA, and other historical societies were limited in their abilities, the SPNEA would fill the void, undertake "aggressive action," and "act instantly wherever needed to lead in the preservation." Its special charge would be the houses of the earliest period because they were an "utmost rarity." His organization, nevertheless, was concerned with all historic architecture because its destruction was so pervasive. "Out of one hundred of the most worthwhile buildings still in private hands in New England," he wrote later, "I suppose it would be safe to say that about a third would be wholly destroyed, a third altered beyond recognition and stripped of their attractive finish, and a third bought for preservation and after a fashion preserved by historical societies, family associations or special societies formed for the purpose. The net result will probably be the loss within fifty years or so of two-thirds of any list of buildings that could be prepared."⁴¹

The impetus for the SPNEA's organization came wholly from Appleton. When he first sounded out his ideas with Bolton, who subsequently served as the Society's president, the Athenaeum librarian was very "skeptical" of the project, but it was Appleton's "earnestness and his common sense," he recounted later, which led him to offer his help. Besides writing the charter, Appleton also persuaded seventeen friends to act as incorporators and then he alone appeared before the state legislature for the Society's incorporation. "There were those in the Legislature when we

⁴¹[Appleton], "The SPNEA," Bulletin 1 (May 1910):4, 5, 6; Appleton to Judge Samuel H. Fisher, January 29, 1926, SPNEA.

applied for a charter," he noted, "who feared that we were not a real bona fide organization"; but the supporters of New England traditionalism secured a quick approval. As with his PRMA, he devised a tax-exemption clause and then "fixed it up with Senator Rockwood in order to assure its passage."⁴² For the next two years Appleton, as corresponding secretary, was the sole office worker in the Society's headquarters, one-half of a single room which was shared with the Metropolitan Improvement League at 20 Beacon Street. In 1913 the SPNEA, or rather Appleton since he attended to nearly all of the association's business, moved to larger headquarters at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, an organization with which he maintained close ties and had earlier served on its council. There the Society stayed for four years until, after many public pleas for larger offices, it moved to its present quarters at the grand Harrison Gray Otis house on Cambridge Street.

Editorial work, preservation efforts, and office duties were all undertaken by Appleton. Although he deliberately took what appeared to be a low-key position as corresponding secretary, all of his cohorts recognized him as the Society's driving force. This lifetime bachelor immersed himself in historic preservation and, as his sister would explain later, Sumner "was often lonely, but lost himself completely in his work." In the Brahmin tradition of service and philanthropy he also refused any salary. "The actual work of the Society is done by myself without pay," he wrote an interested preservationist, "and I have found it practically essential that I pay for all sorts of incidentals myself in order that

⁴²Charles K. Bolton, "Tribute to William Sumner Appleton," Old-Time New England 30 (April 1940):109 (hereafter cited as OTNE); unidentified article, Boston Globe, April 12, 1912, SPNEA; Appleton, "A Line a Day," February 11 and 14, 1910, SPNEA.

everything shall run smoothly. It would have been difficult, and perhaps impossible, to have made the Society a growing concern if it had from the beginning been necessary to pay me a salary based on what such services would normally command." These incidentals included sizable financial contributions, the purchase of an impressive wealth of materials for the library and museum, and even covering the annual deficit for most of the Society's first decade. At the same time Appleton maintained the Society's links with other patriotic and historical organizations. Until 1913, for example, he served as the chairman of the Advisory Committee on Cooperation in Patriotic Work and, like Bolton, also served as a director of the Bunker Hill Monument Association.⁴³ Carrying on his father's tradition, Appleton moreover was elected to Boston's elite institutions, including the Massachusetts Historical Society, all of which he used to anchor the SPNEA in the mainstream of Boston's traditionalist organizations.

Although Appleton actually managed the Society, he chose with the incorporators' approval Charles Knowles Bolton as president. Apparently Appleton preferred to work in a retiring manner and thought that Bolton with his secure institutional ties would be an excellent figurehead for the Society. After studying at Harvard under Norton, Bolton became for a short period a Harvard librarian; in 1908 he began a five-year term as treasurer of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. As the librarian of the Boston Athenaeum Bolton also rubbed shoulders with the area's most distinguished gentlemen, writers, and historians; he would

⁴³Dorothy Appleton Weld to Bertram K. Little, April 2, (1948?), Appleton file, SPNEA; Appleton to Frances E. D. Porteous, February 14, 1919, SPNEA; for the Advisory Committee see Annual Meeting report, March 3, 1913, in Advisory Committee file, SPNEA.

thus be able to promote the Society's name and financial needs within their ranks. The Society's president even had social ties with J. P. Morgan, Jr., Henry Ford, and John D. Rockefeller, the latter of whom owned a Cleveland mansion which adjoined that of Bolton's parents. If his diaries are any indication of his interests, Bolton made virtually no references to architecture or preservation work until 1911 or 1912, that is, after his election as the SPNEA president. Since Appleton's role in the Society was so commanding, it took years for Bolton to really exert his presidential presence. After one meeting, for example, he wrote: "Appleton tried to cast dignity over me when speaking of Preservation Society affairs by calling me 'Mr. President,' but the dignity rolled off I fear."⁴⁴ Besides raising money, it seems that Bolton's principal role was as Appleton's confidant and adviser; the corresponding secretary's ambitions, at times, went beyond the immediately practical and it was Bolton who exercised the restraining hand.

Although the Society was a centralized organization with Appleton and Bolton usually pulling the strings, the leadership also included two vice presidents from each New England state and a Board of Trustees. These officers were men and women of real influence, social prominence, financial power, and obvious leadership in their respective communities. In spite of Appleton's insistence upon setting the pace of preservation, he nonetheless wanted these officers to take upon themselves more responsibilities. He admitted to Bolton in 1917 that "there is a need of finding a few people to help me shoulder burdens which are a little more

⁴⁴Bolton's "Note-Book" in 1890 mentions trying for history honors with Norton; for his comment on the SPNEA presidency, see "Note Book," September 18, 1915, Bolton Papers, MHS.

onerous than I care to assume myself." The position of the trustees, he continued, was usually that of "cheerfully voting, as it did at the last meeting, 'to leave the whole question to Mr. Appleton with full power.'"⁴⁵ The trustees, however, were not a mere rubber stamp because they vetoed a few of Appleton's more ambitious pet projects; but he would somehow gain his way after a time.

Appleton's criteria for selecting the trustees and vice presidents, in fact, created part of the problem resulting in the "leave it to Appleton" syndrome. More often than not, commitment to tradition came before experience in preservation. The criteria usually included social position, wealth, known propensity for philanthropy, connections to kindred societies, and willingness to use one's name to help advertise the Society's needs. The officers included a college president, bankers, manufacturers, Harvard faculty, women from prominent families, and active officials in the patriotic and ancestral societies. Appleton even offered positions in the 1920s to Mrs. J. P. Morgan of New York City, who declined a trusteeship, and Henry Ford, who accepted a vice presidency for Michigan. The vice presidents and trustees also included New Englanders such as Colonel Robert H. Goddard, a very wealthy Rhode Islander and former Good Government politician, George M. Curtis, treasurer of the International Silver Company and a founder of the Walpole Society, George Dudley Seymour, an affluent patent attorney and thorough antiquarian, William T. Aldrich, later president of the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts, and Clara Endicott Sears, author and restorer of Bronson Alcott's Transcendentalist commune

⁴⁵ Appleton to Bolton, June 27, 1917, Bolton file, SPNEA.

at Fruitlands.⁴⁶

Ralph Adams Cram also served as a trustee and his position, albeit less than active, illustrated the power of antimodernism in the SPNEA's leadership. Cram was an influential writer and architect whose career was "filled with firebreathing polemics against modern culture" which, he claimed, deified "'purely material and enervating bodily comfort.'" Like Norton and Appleton, his "concern for archaeological correctness represented a general reaction against the devaluation of symbols." Stressing the importance of inherited cultural symbols, Cram wrote, "'without these, men cannot live, nor can society endure.'"⁴⁷ Cram's deep sense of tradition represented not simply a disillusionment with modernity, but a belief that the past order and customs offered the key to future peace and stability. Such notions were the premises of the Gospel of Preservation.

When the SPNEA was organized Appleton faced the dilemma whether it should be a strictly Brahmin organization or one which also sought support from a larger, though select, community. Some had proposed, and he found "much merit in that suggestion," that the Society's membership be limited and its fees large. Some years later he even felt that "we would have been financially much better off under such circumstances." But, like his earlier PRMA, he thought in 1910 that a community-based organization with a choice leadership might be more satisfactory. The SPNEA would

⁴⁶ Appleton to Mrs. J. P. Morgan, May 24, 1924, and her reply of May 30, 1924; C. K. Bolton to Henry Ford, April [?], 1924 and his reply of April 15, 1924, SPNEA. Biographical sketches of Goddard, Curtis, Seymour, and other officers may be found in Who's Who in New England, vol. 1 (1909) and in the SPNEA files.

⁴⁷ Lears, No Place of Grace, pp. 203, 205, 208; this work is also the best analysis of Cram's antimodernism.

accomplish another mission, moreover, as it helped to educate and assimilate the newer families of wealth and abilities into the traditionalist culture. Therefore the Society was open to all "who are by residence, birth, or in any way connected with New England." The culture and heritage of New England, of course, would be defined by its traditionalist groups; but they also realized, as E. Digby Baltzell explained, that newer elite members would have to be coopted and encouraged to contribute to the leadership and protection of the upper classes and their culture.⁴⁸

The Gospel of Preservation, as voiced by Appleton and his Society, therefore was directed at the more affluent and select of each local community. The corresponding secretary, nonetheless, encouraged the more middling classes to join and, more importantly, to contribute to the preservation campaigns. Like the old-time New England community, Appleton hoped that all responsible classes would recognize and support the wisdom of their leaders and the virtue of tradition. With historic preservation in private hands these traditionalists felt confident that their historical identity and primacy could be protected. The SPNEA then represented the institutionalization of that culture as it promised to protect the most visible symbol of the past order, the buildings of colonial and revolutionary-era New England.

⁴⁸ Appleton to Mrs. C. A. Gosney, July 6, 1939, North Carolina Society for Preservation file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "The SPNEA," Bulletin 1 (May 1910):5. Fees were first pegged at \$2.00 per annum for an Associate Membership, \$5.00 per annum for Active Membership, and \$50.00 for a Life Membership. Baltzell, Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia, p. 29. Samuel E. Morison noted the same assimilative powers of Bostonian society; see his One Boy's Boston, 1887-1901 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), p. 63. SPNEA membership after one year was 321; after two years 642; by 1917 it neared 1600.

The Symbolic Function of Architecture

The preserved buildings of the past were not simply constructs of timber and stone, but more importantly they represented the continuity of generations, the values of their respective eras, and an implicit commentary upon the changes associated with the modern day. As Appleton and other traditionalists voiced the Gospel of Preservation, they feared that the New England of their own day--whether that of the new immigrants or the modernist natives--had abandoned the wisdom of the past for the materialism of the present. That past wisdom not only included the personal virtues of hard work, rugged individualism, community responsibility, and rural idealism, but the notions of deferential democracy and traditionalist, select leadership as well. These cherished values, preservationists argued, were sorely needed by modern New England as it was rocked by rapid change. While these preservationists were motivated by a sincere noblesse oblige, their perspective was sharply limited by their class and culture. In a world marked by heterogeneity and complexity they preserved a past characterized by homogeneity and simplicity. Their Gospel of Preservation, nonetheless, accorded well with the conservative brand of progressivism which Massachusetts advanced; preservationists and most patrician reformers cast suspicious eyes upon too much popular democracy, union collectivism, and similar challenges to the authority of the propertied classes.

The extant architecture of the past, preservationists claimed, was a bond linking past and present; it reminded the present generation that its successes depended in part upon the perseverance and sacrifices of New England's forebears. As Charles Eliot Norton explained:

No human life is complete in itself; it is but a link, however individual in its form, however different from every other, in a chain reaching back indefinitely into the past, reaching forward indefinitely into the future. . . . To maintain in full vigor the sense of the dependence of the individual life upon the past, more is needed than a mere intellectual recognition of the fact. Such is the frailty of our nature that our principles require to be supported by sentiment, and our sentiments draw nourishment from material things, from visible memorials, from familiar objects to which affection may cling. And it is this nourishment that the true home supplies.

Anything which threatened these buildings and homes, he wrote, was morally evil. These historic homes, moreover, established a personal bond between modern visitors and ancient peoples. "Every house has a life and a personality of its own," claimed an SPNEA writer. "The closer we come in touch with this life, the more we love it, the deeper the impression it makes upon us."⁴⁹ The preserved past, therefore, taught through its symbols a respect and admiration for the earlier civilization.

The buildings of the seventeenth century with their medieval flavor, rugged simplicity, and Anglo-Saxon character greatly interested Appleton and he worked through the SPNEA to preserve them. Unlike the opulent Georgian mansions which often found favor and preservation in modern, materialistic times, the crude dwellings of the earlier era were rapidly disappearing. In fact Appleton estimated in 1914 that "fully one-third of these that were standing in 1890 have disappeared." Some of those that remained, however, had suffered from "that touch of mediocrity" as modern embellishments replaced the medieval mannerisms.⁵⁰ "Houses of this date," he explained, "lend themselves with great difficulty to the average person's

⁴⁹Norton, "The Lack of Old Houses in America," p. 638; J. M. Arms Sheldon, "The 'Old Indian House' at Deerfield, Massachusetts, and the Effort Made in 1847 to Save it from Destruction," OTNE 12 (January 1922): 99.

⁵⁰Appleton to Celeste Bush, February 17, 1914, Thomas Lee House file, SPNEA.

idea of a comfortable home and accordingly the houses are rapidly disappearing" or being altered. Appleton felt that "our Preservation Society should particularly aim to save" these dwellings not simply because of their medievalisms, but because "to my mind the 17th century [building] is the more strictly New England type, or I might say Anglo-Saxon type. The other [Georgian] is after all but an importation from the Latin countries, bringing with it the flavor of Greek and Roman civilization, with which our ancestral lines are not particularly connected. The 17th century work has the flavor of the soil and is the sort of thing our ancestors saw in their English homes, and I must say it makes a powerful appeal to me."⁵¹ The racial purity of seventeenth-century dwellings, together with the medieval craftsmanship and ambiance which were embodied in them, consequently stirred Appleton to work for their preservation in a modern New England which was sorely at variance with his cherished old order.

The architectural construction of these early settlers' houses, moreover, symbolized the values and spirit of the colonial period. According to J. Frederick Kelly, an associate of Appleton who was appointed a consulting architect to the Society, "truth is the fundamental principle of architecture." The buildings of a particular era, therefore, should "reflect, faithfully and without distortion, the economic and social conditions out of which they sprang." When "the early domestic architecture of the American colonies [was] judged by this criterion," he claimed, it was "unmistakably pure and virile. . . . Its building is honest, straightforward, devoid of affection and sham. The early Colonial houses are true

⁵¹ Appleton, memorandum, April 12, 1919, Brown House Scrapbook, SPNEA; Appleton to Murray Corse, March 16, 1918, Brown House file, SPNEA.

in two respects, both of crucial importance," he continued. "First, they expressed with entire simplicity and directness the conditions which produced them. Secondly, and hardly less important, their implication was always intensely intimate, domestic. They were true to their milieu; and they were equally true to their purpose."⁵²

The true "dignity" of these colonial-era structures, the architect explained, stemmed from "a rugged and vigorous integrity due in large measure to . . . the crudity of the construction." The framing of these dwellings, an aspect which equally intrigued Appleton, should "delight anyone possessed of the smallest amount of architectural sense. A feeling of boundless strength, of security and steadfastness, as well as a notable kind of dignity, is inseparable from the ponderous timbers which go to make up these mighty frames." The framing of a colonial-era building provided a sharp contrast with that of the present day, Kelly conjectured, and showed the differences between the virile ancients and the flaccid moderns. "The frame house of to-day, built as it is of 2-by-4 studs which must be sheathed with inch boards to impart to the framework the practicable modicum of rigidity, seems pathetically, not to say ludicrously, frail."⁵³

Like Appleton, Kelly praised the utilitarian nature of colonial buildings with their simplicity and lack of crass embellishment. "Up to about the middle of the eighteenth century . . . ," he explained, "utility had been the determining influence upon each stage in the house plan. This powerful and hitherto decisive factor now gave way to other influences,

⁵²J. Frederick Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, 1924, Reprint (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), p. 1.

⁵³Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, pp. 1, 2, 21.

itself becoming of secondary consideration. Economy and intimacy of arrangement were superseded by spaciousness and formality; and massiveness of construction was no longer the rule. Rather, massiveness was replaced by elegance and refinement of detail."⁵⁴ Lamenting the loss of this personal, intimate, and localistic community as symbolized by the buildings of the colonial period, Kelly joined other traditionalists in their disillusionment with the modern era of New England, especially its weak spirit, gilded tone, shattered identity, and impersonal nature.

The preserved colonial buildings symbolized, moreover, the pioneer and primary virtues of the Anglo-Saxon people. A home such as the long-gone "Old Indian House" at Deerfield, opined one SPNEA writer, "symbolizes the pioneer spirit, not only of its builder . . . but the pioneer spirit of that marvelous seventeenth century which strove ever to transform savagery into civilization in this new world." That house, if it had been saved, could have helped arouse the "consciousness of the American people to the truth that these rare legacies of the past are, in reality, vital and inspiring help in preserving these fundamental pioneer virtues without which no nation can attain true greatness." Besides illustrating these

⁵⁴Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, p. 14. Appleton praised Kelly's book, while George F. Dow thought it was dry and the work of "an architect with only mild antiquarian leanings"; see Appleton to Kelly, October 29, 1921, and Dow memorandum, n.d., Kelly file, SPNEA. Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., has maintained that there were two generations of preservationists in early twentieth-century New England. While the earlier "antiquarians" were interested primarily in illustrating the culture of the colonial period, the next generation was more concerned with "buildings that had unusual structural features or a high proportion of surviving original material"; see his article, "The Broadening View of the Historic Preservation Movement," in Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. by Ian M. G. Quimby (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 123. Hosmer's characterization or model actually obscures the real continuity and shared interests of these two generations, as illustrated by the cases of Appleton and Kelly.

pioneer strengths, Norton explained, these old ancestral homes also evoked "other influences of a different order that have been among the most powerful in shaping the moral nature of the English race." Because these houses have been destroyed, "sentiments which have been the steadiest supports of virtue, and the sources of the purest joys, have lost their hold on our lives, for they only flourish where their roots can strike deep into the past."⁵⁵

As symbols of the past, these preserved homes could be used to inspire and stir the "new generation . . . to whom the old conditions are unknown and hard to realize." In a modern world which apparently had lost its sense of conviction, Bolton noted a few months after the Red Scare of 1920 that "our ancestors, on the other hand, were ready at all times to face realities. . . . If they wanted safety they were willing to strike terror into the hearts of possible evildoers." Parents would take their children to a public execution, for example, "that they might learn respect for the law by witnessing the horrible results of its transgression." In spite of some "gruesome" happenings, he concluded, "'the good old days' were doubtless better than ours in many ways." Although agreeing that there had been an "underlying respect for law, religion and the rights of others," SPNEA museum director George F. Dow observed however, that "there were fully as many sinners as saints living within the control of the Puritan aristocracy in the Massachusetts Bay."⁵⁶ While the profanity,

⁵⁵ Sheldon, "The 'Old Indian House' at Deerfield," pp. 99, 108; Norton, "The Lack of Old Homes in America," p. 640.

⁵⁶ Drake, Old Landmarks of Boston, pp. vi-vii; Charles K. Bolton, "A Half-Forgotten Tragedy of 1755," OTNE 11 (July 1920):12, 14; George F. Dow, Domestic Life in New England in the Seventeenth Century (Topsfield, Mass.: Perkins Press, 1925), pp. i, 22-23, 30; this author acknowledged that he sought a "readjustment" of modern attitudes toward the Puritans and based his findings on new research tools such as the itemized inventories of probate records.

loose living, drunkenness, and petty crime of those sinners would shock some traditionalists of the modern day, he added, these forebears endured primitive living and frontier conditions. As the SPNEA preserved the past, it is important to note, few, if any, of these sinners were ever mentioned. The leaders of colonial society, like their modern counterparts, devoted their attention to improving the morality and character of the populace.

Preserved homes likewise were an important part of America's civil religion and traditionalists' attempts to inculcate patriotism and good citizenship. Since the SPNEA had such strong ties with organizations such as the SR, SAR, and DAR, its stress upon the notions of service to one's government, duty to one's flag, and a defense of tradition was somewhat natural. Believing in the Brahmin tradition of loyalty to state and local governments, Appleton, for one, considered it a "laudable" mission to promote the "veneration for the beginnings of our permanent political sub-divisions," and he similarly admired the tale of Jonathan Harrington and the Minutemen as one to stir patriotic emotions. The goal of good government and citizenship was a basis for other preservationists' efforts because they felt that civic pride was on the decline with modernization and governmental centralization.⁵⁷ The Brahmin tradition of patriotic and responsible rule was strong in Appleton and others as they attempted to restore the mythical, once-peaceful society built upon class leadership and deferential democracy.

⁵⁷ Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," p. 161. Appleton's support of the civil religion, however, did not prevent him from urging the preservation of homes of Tories or other opponents of the Revolution. A scathing criticism of the decline of civic pride is made by Norton in "The Lack of Old Homes in America," p. 637.

The need to "Americanize" newer residents of the region underlay some preservation campaigns, such as the ones to save Paul Revere's home in Boston and the Seven Gables in Salem. Appleton noted his further agreement with the contention of Benjamin Loring Young, Speaker of the state's House of Representatives, who noted in 1923 that "Americanization" could not be "forced into the hearts of men and women by coercion and by law. Patriotism and love of country spring from the hearts as well as from the mind. They belong to the emotional rather than the intellectual side of character."⁵⁸ When visiting a historical home or museum, young people or new Americans would experience such emotions and learn to respect their government and leaders. These aspects of the civil religion included not simply teaching good citizenship and traditional Anglo-Saxon values to the immigrants and lower classes, but reminding society's natural leaders of their duty to step forward, follow tradition, and secure a peaceful society.

Historic preservation, therefore, was undertaken partly out of respect for New England's forebears and their culture and partly out of a deep-seated belief that these buildings were potent symbols of the values, virtues, and order which, preservationists claimed, were urgently needed by Americans as they experienced disorientation from industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. The buildings of the past, such as those of the seventeenth century, supposedly represented a strong moralistic community whose leaders, albeit elitist, were responsible and cultured. The people of this community, moreover, were mostly hard-working, family-

⁵⁸ Benjamin Loring Young, "Extract from remarks at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants," November 21, 1923, in Young file, SPNEA.

oriented, neighborly, and respectful toward their just leaders and laws. While preservationists realized that past New Englanders had their own faults, they believed that colonial society was more personal, intimate, and meaningful than that of the twentieth century.

The SPNEA's Gospel of Preservation had many disciples. Some preservationists came from the patriotic societies and stressed the civil religion, while others were from the arts and crafts movement and praised the close bond between worker, employer, and society; even more were drawn from the traditional Brahmin institutions whose members lamented the onslaught of the new immigrant, the new democracy, and the new social order. All of these groups came together in the SPNEA and prized the homes and material culture of the past as powerful symbols which embodied the essence of New England's greatness. Yet none of these groups was content merely with a personal possession of this culture of the past, although many did claim such a hold. What preservationists wanted was an influence over society--as they had in the past--and the power to shape the modern culture in the light of the old traditions. With their control over New England's image of its past, therefore, they sought to impose a continuity upon the present and future where their families, their traditions, and their way of life would be dominant. As preservationists voiced the Gospel of Preservation and protected these sacred symbols, they asserted their cultural hegemony over a changed society.

Preserving the Symbols and Artifacts of the Past

During its first decade the SPNEA acquired seven houses and, as importantly, aided in the preservation of at least two score more buildings. From its first days of operation, as revealed particularly by Appleton's

diary, the Society had ambitious goals. After visiting such homes as the Pierce-Nichols house in Salem or Gloucester's White-Ellery house, the corresponding secretary would note: "We must have it." Yet the SPNEA's first acquisition, the seventeenth-century Swett-Ilsley house in Newburyport, came after a year of organization-building and spreading the Gospel of Preservation. As the Society's mission was recognized by the traditionalist and wealthy classes of New England, it gained the financial resources which were needed to make impressive headway in the struggle to preserve the past and to challenge a modern temper which often appeared indifferent towards its efforts.

The House of the Seven Gables (1669, 1697) in Salem had caught Appleton's attention and upon his "earnest solicitation" Caroline Emmerton, a SPNEA trustee, purchased and restored the building as both a tribute to Nathaniel Hawthorne (the house was restored to the 1840 setting of his novel) and as a settlement house for immigrants. Since that section of Salem was largely an Italian quarter, in fact Henry James claimed that the foreigners' presence was "'remorseless'" there, Emmerton predicted that "the historical and literary associations of the old houses must surely help in making American citizens of our boys and girls." There the immigrants were not only taught American history, but domestic and artistic crafts associated with old New England as well.⁵⁹

The SPNEA and Appleton also assisted in the preservation of another

⁵⁹ Appleton to Caroline Emmerton, November 13, 1913, Emmerton file, SPNEA; James quoted in Barbara M. Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 164; Caroline O. Emmerton, The Chronicles of Three Old Houses (Boston: Thomas Todd Company, 1935), p. 39. Somewhat ironically Hawthorne was no lover of old houses; he believed that lodging under a wigwam was more advantageous than in an old home; see Norton, "The Lack of Old Homes in America," p. 638.

seventeenth-century Salem landmark, the "Old Bakery." After it was threatened by what he called modern "improvements"--that is, its demolition to make way for a movie theater--and possible purchase by a "violin manufactory looking for the old timber," Appleton jumped into the ring and purchased the building, but not the land which had already been sold. Although he regretted that the "Old Bakery" had to be moved, he nonetheless intended to dismantle the structure and stores its timbers elsewhere.⁶⁰ The structural construction of the building was the lure for his attention: it was "almost brutal in its simplicity," he noted. "The whole work is essentially mediaeval, and the decorative motives are of Gothic extraction." Yet, rather than dismantle it, he persuaded Emmerton to purchase and remove it to a site near the Seven Gables. Although the "City Council was reluctant and questioned the house's worthiness," she removed it and after restoration the "Old Bakery" replaced the Gables as the headquarters for her settlement house. Appleton trumpeted this episode as a success story for the SPNEA: "The mere existence of this Society is a safeguard for all our finest old houses. When one such is in danger of destruction the possibility of our intervening seems to occur more and more frequently to those whom ties of residence or family bind to the old building."⁶¹

⁶⁰[Appleton], "The Old Bakery," Bulletin 2 (August 1911):13; George F. Dow to Appleton, April 5, 1911, Old Bakery file, SPNEA. According to his diary, Appleton apparently also purchased the doomed Bunker Garrison house in Durham, New Hampshire, for its timbers to be reerected elsewhere; see his "A Line a Day," October 7, 1910, SPNEA.

⁶¹[Appleton], "The Old Bakery," Bulletin 2 (August 1911):14; Emmerton, The Chronicles of Three Old Houses, p. 47; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 3 (July 1912):20. The third structure added by Emmerton and bought at the request of the SPNEA in 1916 was the Retire Beckett house of 1655.

While the SPNEA had been actively assisting other preservation efforts, the trustees and Appleton were anxious to purchase their own historic building. The Society's first acquisition finally came in May 1911 when the Swett-Ilsley house of Newburyport, Massachusetts was purchased. Somewhat ironically, Appleton earlier had inspected this seventeenth-century dwelling, which originally possessed one room on each of its two stories, and declared then that the house was "very interesting" but "lacked sufficient historic association and architectural merit to justify the Trustees in making a purchase." He had predicted nevertheless that if the house eluded the SPNEA's protection "some person may find it profitable to destroy the building and erect a three or four family tenement house on the site." What brought the Swett-Ilsley house into its possession, then, were very generous financial arrangements (to ensure the house's purchase) offered by a New York businessman, who was a relative by marriage of the Ilsley line. According to a local newspaper account, the acquisition was made by a society "composed of wealthy Bostonians whose purpose is to save these famous landmarks of the early settlers."⁶²

What interested Appleton most about this colonial dwelling were its craftsmanship, its simple features, and the revealing look at seventeenth-century life which it provided. According to the corresponding secretary, the features of "first-class interest" were the summer beams, the fireplace, and the chimney. At a time when modern Americans romanticized the

⁶²[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 3 (July 1912):13; Appleton, Circular letter dated April 14, 1911, Swett-Ilsley Scrapbook, SPNEA; Wm. H. Tweddle to Appleton, May 20, 1911, Swett-Ilsley file, SPNEA; "Old Ilsley House to be Preserved by Historical Folks," Newburyport Herald-Leader, June 10, 1911.

close-knit colonial families congregating around the hearth, Appleton noted that the fireplace of the Swett-Ilsley house was the "largest I know of" and probably one of the largest in New England. The chimney foundations, accordingly, were an "enormous size." The craftsmanship of the builder, moreover, was aptly visible with the "elaborate work on the summer beam on the second story" which was one of the best in New England for its "fine workmanship."⁶³ The Swett-Ilsley house, he believed, was a worthy example of the relation between skilled workers and their work, between a sturdy dwelling and a virile people, and between a close family and a strong society. While it may not have been an architectural gemstone, it was a fitting symbol of colonial days.

The Society's second acquisition, the Samuel Fowler house in Danversport, Massachusetts, came soon after in 1912, but represented a very different era. Acquired largely through the benefaction of Heloise Meyer, a consistent friend of the Society and sister of the wealthy investment banker and statesman George von Lengerke Meyer, the Fowler house caused a stir in the SPNEA since it was built only in 1809. The Society's treasurer, William C. Endicott, for example, wrote Appleton: "Personally I don't think very much of this house"; he considered the ornate mansion "The Lindens" a better purchase. Appleton acknowledged the general criticism and wrote: "To be quite frank, only those who appreciate the finer touches of early 19th century work [are those] who see how good that house really is. Others are apt to be disappointed that it is not ornate." Reporting the acquisition to the membership, the corresponding secretary claimed that the two-story brick dwelling "reflects the simple tastes of

⁶³ Appleton, Circular letter, April 14, 1911, Swett-Ilsley file, SPNEA.

its owner" which were "as severely simple as it could be." Accordingly, and in tune with Appleton's own preferences, "the principal features of the house may be said to be simplicity, good taste, solid construction, splendid preservation, and homogeneity."⁶⁴

The interconnection between the character of the house and its builder was highlighted by Appleton when he announced the acquisition. Son of a soldier who had served at Lexington on April 19, 1775, Samuel Fowler in turn became a patriot, a good citizen, and a successful businessman. His simple tastes began when he was "educated in the village school" where "his seat . . . was but a rude bench and his desk a portion of board placed across two barrels." With such humble beginnings he nonetheless became a prominent leader in the local tanning industry. Surely a model for the modern age, Fowler had been "public-spirited and ever ready to aid financially such enterprises as tended to improve the village and town." His personal habits, moreover, had been impeccable. Not only was he "strictly temperate" and very religious, he also "rose regularly at four in the morning, winter and summer, and went to his mills to superintend the beginning of the day's work." Fowler's temper, furthermore, accorded well with the self-perception of the modern Brahmin; he had "a kind and generous temperament, gladly helping others to help themselves, which was to his mind the wisest charity."⁶⁵ His simple life matched the appearances of his home and, Appleton believed, its artistry was inseparable

⁶⁴William C. Endicott to Appleton, October 9, 1911, Endicott file, SPNEA; Appleton to David Bonner, Jr., August 1, 1919, Fowler House A & M file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "The Samuel Fowler House: Our Second Acquisition," Bulletin 3 (March 1912):5,6.

⁶⁵[Appleton] "The Samuel Fowler House: Our Second Acquisition," Bulletin 3 (March 1912):3-5.

from his character.

In 1912 the Society also purchased the Cooper-Frost-Austin house (c. 1657) on Linnaean Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After the SPNEA trustees voted in 1911 to "get possession of the house in whatever way may appear feasible" and Appleton even hinted that others might demolish it, Cambridge residents came out in force to help with the successful campaign to purchase the dwelling. While the Society promoted its purchase it again stressed the family histories of the residents. Deacon John Cooper, its builder, had been a leader in church and state, having served eleven years as a selectman of Cambridge and thirteen years as deacon of the First Church; not only did he hold "offices of trust" in the community, but he was "prominent in all town affairs" as well.⁶⁶ Evoking the sentiment of family and home, Appleton tried also to enlist the support of ancestral organizations, such as the Frost Family Association, which sought to establish a hereditary home in New England. Important for the Society's financial well-being, the Cooper house acquisition provided a prominent focal point for the Gospel of Preservation and the wealthy traditionalists of Cambridge and Boston.

Another seventeenth-century dwelling, the Society's fourth acquisition, was purchased on an option in 1913. The Bennett-Boardman house of Saugus, Massachusetts had long been a powerful symbol of the cherished old order. Nathaniel M. Hawkes, a local antiquarian and public servant, had described the house in terms which appealed not simply to the businessman,

⁶⁶ Mrs. Silvio M. DeGozzaldi, "An Account of the Occupants of the Cooper-Austin House, Cambridge, Massachusetts," Bulletin 3 (July 1912):4. Local support for the SPNEA was shown when over five hundred residents and friends attended the opening of the Cooper house; see Bolton, "Note-Book," November 1, 1912, Bolton Papers, MHS.

but to the traditionalist as well. "The projecting upper story indicates that it was built by a well-to-do Englishman," he wrote. "It was simply a loyal imitation of wonted forms by the commercial Puritan when he set up his tabernacle in the newer, freer England which he was founding." The Boardman house, moreover, portrayed the craftsmanship and virility of its builder. "Some houses, like some people, boast of beauty and strength by outside boldness. This one is built massively, but its impressive sturdiness is only seen in the interior, whose chamfered American oak timbers put to the blush the skill of modern artificers of wood." The house's construction, he felt, had been obviously "guided by the dexterous hand that long ago lost its cunning."⁶⁷

The Boardman home should inspire the present, Hawkes claimed, because it was "so uncorrupted by the fever of modern ways." Unlike the nearby "parvenue villas," a visitor to this homestead would be "impressed with a sense of homelikness [sic] . . . , which bears so many reminders of leafy, rural England." As a symbol of the Anglo-Saxon culture and its dominance, he argued, the Boardman home must be protected and its values cherished. "American demagogues, in the demand for newly-made Irish votes, pretend to dislike England," Hawkes explained, "but underlying this the true American has all along imitated and revered his Mother England." These yearnings for a homestead, although "anglophobists sneer at such things," were "evidence of the existence in men of the better and purer instincts." American roots were reaching out, as with the Boardman house, "not only towards one's own birthplace, but far away to the cradle

⁶⁷ Nathaniel Mortimer Hawkes, Hearths and Homes of Old Lynn, excerpted in Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman file, SPNEA.

of his race, the land of his own stock."⁶⁸ The notions of Anglo-Saxonism, pre-industrial craftsmanship, a hereditary home in a rootless land, and a historical identity with one's forebears all figured in the arguments to preserve the Boardman house.

Appleton stressed other episodes in the history of the "Scotch"-Boardman house by presenting it as a symbol of industrious immigrants who gained their freedom and wealth through hard work and perseverance. Claiming that it was "doubtless the most interesting building in America to all persons of Scottish descent," the corresponding secretary explained that the Boardman house "was built to house Scotch prisoners taken by Cromwell at the Battle of Dunbar and shipped to America to work for a term of years as indentured servants for the Undertakers of the Iron Works at Lynn." Consequently, "to these humble and pathetic beginnings thousands of our present Americans must trace their ancestral lines." Unlike the immigrants of recent years, Appleton clearly implied, these Scots "were a worthy and cleanly lot" and had been "carefully selected as being best calculated to help its [the iron work's] development." These earlier immigrants, moreover, "seem to have been an orderly and law-abiding lot and a distinct addition to the community in which they settled." The Scotsmen, he claimed, had respected the community's culture, intermarried with their Puritan neighbors, and eventually showed their patriotism and loyalty to the new nation.⁶⁹ The "Scotch"-Boardman house, therefore, became a memorial to the Protestant work ethic, the

⁶⁸ Hawkes, Hearths and Homes of Old Lynn, excerpted in Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman file, SPNEA.

⁶⁹ Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," p. 166; Appleton to Annie S. Symonds, December 15, 1916, Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 12

pursuit of individual freedom, the model immigrant and his acculturation, the creed of Anglo-Saxonism, and the gamut of traditional values. Its acquisition ensured the preservation of a fitting symbol for the Gospel of Preservation.

In the following two years the Society acquired two dwellings whose setting and tone would be in sharp contrast: the Laws cottage in Sharon, New Hampshire and the Harrison Gray Otis mansion in Boston. In 1915 the SPNEA accepted the former, a very simple, albeit "quaint and picturesque" dwelling, only because it came as a gift with funds for its restoration. Its acquisition, however, illustrated a division within the ranks of the Society; as Bolton explained, one school of thought preferred simple, small houses, while the other wanted opulent mansions. Typical of that break were the differences between Emily Morison and her son Samuel Eliot Morison. She wrote the corresponding secreatry in 1916: "My son was so 'down' on the Society for buying 'those little houses in the country, like that at Sharon, instead of preserving a large, handsome house like the former Otis house. He little knows that I was responsible for the Sharon house."⁷⁰ These divisions were somewhat natural, however, as

(April 1922):168; see also Appleton, "New England's Antiquarian Heritage," MS. of article which appeared in Boston Transcript, April 15, 1939, Appleton file, SPNEA. More recent findings have cast doubts on the contention that the Boardman house was built to house Scottish indentures. The SPNEA-owned house, near the site of the original "Scotch" house, was probably built after 1686; see Abbott Lowell Cummings, "The Scotch-Boardman House--A Fresh Appraisal," Parts I and II, OTNE 43 (Winter & Spring 1953).

⁷⁰[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 7 (May 1916):4-5; see also Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," p. 167; Charles K. Bolton, "Tribute to William Sumner Appleton," OTNE 30 (April 1940):108; the latter school he characterized as: "'We are the best selected few/And all the rest are damned;/There's room in heaven for me and you/But we can't have heaven crammed'"; Emily M. Morison to Appleton, May 7, 1916, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA.

various preservationists sought to impart their vision of the past through the corresponding symbols of different buildings. While Appleton persuasively held the Society together, he generally opted for the acquisition of the colonial structures which were simple rather than ornate.

The Harrison Gray Otis house on Cambridge Street, an imposing mansion designed by Charles Bulfinch and built in 1796, symbolized upper-class traditionalist rule and strength in Boston. It was, moreover, "almost as familiar to the oldest Bostonians as the Old South or the Old State House," the Boston Globe reported, "for it is one of the few local historic buildings that has undergone almost no outward transformation since it was put up." It was "threatened" in 1916, Appleton claimed to an Otis descendant, by "a Jewish corporation which plans using it, after extensive remodelling, as a home for aged women. I have no doubt that in the course of time the house will be pulled down." The SPNEA campaigned, therefore not simply for the preservation of the revered structure, but also for its purchase as the new Society headquarters. Appleton even persuaded the local Colonial Dames, as well as seeking other patriotic organizations, to help with the purchase in return for the use of the mansion. In this campaign the SPNEA received strong backing from the traditionalist community and press of Boston. Samuel E. Morison, revering the symbolism and aesthetics of the house, provided most of the historical materials for the Society's press campaign and research about Otis, addressed the trustees and membership about the Federalist leader, and helped to raise money for the purchase.⁷¹ With such traditionalist wealth and backing the

⁷¹"Save Harrison Gray Otis Mansion," Boston Globe, August 2, 1916; Appleton to Harrison Gray Otis, April 16, 1916, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA; for the Colonial Dames see Appleton to Mrs. Barrett Wendell, April 14, 1917, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA. The SPNEA even offered Morison

SPNEA quickly purchased the house from the Jewish corporation and it became the headquarters and symbol of their preservation association.

Harrison Gray Otis represented the roles which traditionalists in Boston most admired: successful businessman, honest public servant, loyal family man, and a consistent leader of the upper class. As the Boston press characterized him, Otis had been born "of pure English stock, strengthened by five generations on New England soil, and refined by three generations devoted to public service and social position." Evoking the rural ideal, the press claimed that Boston's rustic setting "was then an ideal place in which to bring up a boy." Given the best education, but disciplined by parents and teachers, he became at Harvard "the first scholar of the first class of a new nation." Inspired by his uncle James Otis, he became a lawyer and politician. While gaining great wealth through real estate speculations, he proved his business acumen. His aristocratic sentiments also matched those of fellow Federalists who "hated democracy, particularly French democracy. They believed that the country should be governed by men of education and wealth." During the European wars of the 1790s, a time similar to 1916, Otis "helped to push through President Adams' policy of preparedness for the war with France which luckily never came." Otis had been, according to Morison, "one of the national leaders in the policy of Peace with Honor," while supporting a "naval policy which made the Stars and Stripes a terror to the Tricolor."⁷²

a seat on the Board of Trustees for his work, but he declined the nomination since he had too many other obligations; see Morison to Appleton, February 20, 1917, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA.

⁷²"The Otis Home--Boston's Newest Memorial," Boston Sunday Herald, August 6, 1916; Samuel E. Morison, "A Brief Account of Harrison Gray Otis," typescript of an article which appeared in the Bulletin, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA. Morison claimed that this Herald article was a pirated version of his own research; see Morison to Bolton, August 4, 1916, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA.

As a public servant, whether in the state legislature, United States Senate, or as Boston's mayor, Otis had served the public with his enlightened interest. All in all his career, it was claimed, offered worthy inspiration to the modern-day leadership classes.

The Otis house, representing the refined tastes of an affluent leader, presented quite a contrast with two seventeenth-century houses which then captured Appleton's attention. The Norton house (1691) near Guilford, Connecticut, and the Arnold house (c. 1687) in Lincoln, Rhode Island were what Appleton, based on his artistic training and antiquarian interests, found most captivating. The Norton house, a tiny and isolated cottage, "interested me extremely," he wrote, because "it was one of the crudest survivals of colonial architecture that has come down to us." Acknowledging that it typified the era's honesty in construction, he remarked as he stood in its interior: "It was as though the entire frame was exposed to view without stirring from the spot." Because he feared that its vacant condition would attract vandals, Appleton attempted to buy it a number of times. Since he was extremely thrifty and a tough bargainer, however, the preservationist was never able to reach terms with the Polish immigrant who owned it. Instead, and to Appleton's dismay, the Pole sold the house for its timbers and, as Appleton saw it, "this ignorant foreigner has destroyed it." The cause of the tragedy, as far as he was concerned, was not his own stubbornness, but "the difficulties involved in trying to do business with a foreigner, whom fortune had made for the moment the custodian of a really interesting New England antiquity."⁷³

⁷³ Appleton to George Dudley Seymour, May 28, 1914, Seymour file, SPNEA; for the sale see Appleton to H. W. Erving, August 10, 1921, Erving file, SPNEA; for Appleton's conclusions see his "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 12 (April 1922):177.

Appleton, as a result, became more determined than ever that these prized symbols of New England's past should be in the hands of responsible traditionalists, not those of indifferent immigrants.

The Eleazer Arnold house in Rhode Island, deeded to the Society as a gift in 1918, likewise attracted Appleton because of its medievalisms and simplicity. When built around 1687 the house was "so far into the wilderness as to have been called 'at the world's end.'" At that time, Appleton noted, it was even "considered one of the very grandest houses in Rhode Island--something of a seven days' wonder." It now stood, moreover, as an extant symbol of the strong, virile colonists. The house, which Appleton felt was one of "the least changed of those still standing," was heavily timbered with its roof shingles laid in mortar "so as to be considered bullet proof in case of an attack from Indians." Its massive and imposing stone chimney and fireplaces led the corresponding secretary to conclude that it "must ever remain the finest example of the 'stone-end' house in Rhode Island, and the writer knows of nothing to equal it in the United States."⁷⁴ As an example of colonial craftsmanship, styles of life, and personal strengths the Arnold house proved to be a powerful symbol to remind the moderns of their ancestors.

A mid-seventeenth-century dwelling whose fate came to obsess Appleton like no other structure was the Brown house in Watertown, Massachusetts. His interest was first drawn to it in 1915, but his attentions were pulled elsewhere by other properties. In the following few years its condition became so ruinous that it was condemned by the

⁷⁴ Appleton, "Society Collects Old Houses," New York Sun, May 17, 1930; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 10 (October 1919):5; no author, typed history of house, n.d., Arnold House H & B file, SPNEA; Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," p. 168.

town authorities, even though it was hidden from roadside view by billboards. As Appleton described the ruin, "the hole in the roof of the house was large enough to drive a crowded Ford car through. In addition one end of the second story summer beam had decayed and fallen onto the second story floor, and had dragged down the garret floor with it." In spite of that condition, he claimed that the "extremely picturesque" house--originally a one-room dwelling of two stories--was "one of the very best old houses still standing in New England." Since the Society's "Board of Trustees considered the place to be so ruinous as to be beyond preservation," Appleton gambled and with the backing of a few friends purchased it himself. He later recounted to his sister Eleanor: "'Between you and me and the corner lamp post, . . . [the Brown house] is my own personal monument and the fact that it is now standing at all is simply because I got mad and decided that it shouldn't be pulled down, but I would hate to tell you how many thousands I had to risk paying myself had my efforts failed. At one time it seemed as though I would have to sell everything I owned.'⁷⁵ After a few years of his own restoration work, Appleton deeded the Brown house to the Society as a gift in 1922.

Those features which interested Appleton most about the Brown house were its archaeological truth, stark simplicity, and Anglo-Saxon associations. "With the possible exception of the Fairbanks house in Dedham,"

⁷⁵ Appleton, "Brief Account of the Abraham Browne estate in Watertown, Massachusetts," in Brown House H & B file, SPNEA; Appleton to Mary C. Wheelwright, June 11, 1915, Brown Scrapbook, SPNEA; Appleton to Mrs. Eleanor Standen, December 14, 1937, quoted in Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 250. A few years after Appleton bought the Brown house he and a group of friends, including Bolton, likewise purchased the mid-seventeenth-century John Balch house in Beverly, the only remaining house of an "Old Planter," that is, one who came before Winthrop's arrival; see his "Destruction and Preservation," p. 175 and "Notes and Gleanings," OTNE 11 (October 1920):93.

he wrote, it was "the least altered specimen in New England" of a seventeenth-century dwelling. Somewhat ironically, its dilapidated condition contributed to his interest; he was interested in its preservation "just because there is so little there that is worth saving. That is to say, it is a house practically in its original condition, unspoiled by later changes of the old work, such as are to be found in practically every other old house." Because of its brutal simplicity, he knew that few, if any, would be interested in its purchase for preservation. "Houses of this date lend themselves with great difficulty to the average person's idea of a comfortable home and accordingly the houses are rapidly disappearing," he explained. "In fact, the number of one room houses still in existence is pitifully small." But these seventeenth-century houses, like the Brown homestead, were the more strictly "Anglo-Saxon type" and directly tied to his "ancestral lines," all of which, he related, had "a powerful appeal to me."⁷⁶ The strengths, virtues, and values associated with the Brown house, therefore, were greatly prized by the corresponding secretary. As a symbol for the Gospel of Preservation, the Brown house became one of his most powerful statements.

As the Society entered its second decade, the steady pace of acquisitions was maintained. While Appleton personally preferred dwellings of the seventeenth century, he was not one to refuse a gift of a later building, particularly if it came with adequate funds for an endowment. The Richard Jackson house in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had caught his eye as early as his freshman year at Harvard when he admitted both a

⁷⁶ Appleton to Mary C. Wheelwright, July 15, 1918, Brown Scrapbook, SPNEA; Appleton to Heloise Meyer, January 17, 1917, Meyer file, SPNEA; Appleton memorandum, April 12, 1919, Brown Scrapbook, SPNEA; Appleton to Murray Corse, March 16, 1918, Corse file, SPNEA.

liking for the colonial building and an "ignorance of old New England architecture . . . as great as anyone's very well could be." Since this rustic seventeenth-century home interested him so much, he persuaded a benefactor to purchase it and present it to the Society in 1924. Prior to that date, two other houses were acquired as gifts. The Conant house (c. 1720) in Townsend Harbor, Massachusetts was purchased by a friend, Charles Messer Stow, and then deeded to the Society after a life tenancy. The second house, quite an unusual acquisition for an organization devoted to antiquities, was "Ardley," built in 1904 and donated by Mary Perkins Quincy for use as a historical museum for family heirlooms.⁷⁷

Just as important in the Society's work during its first decade were the help and advice which Appleton offered to other preservation movements. The corresponding secretary's aid usually was in line with the Brahmin tradition of self-help: he bestowed his knowledge freely, he advised others on the best means to achieve success, but he expected them to assume their own burdens and perform the necessary work. By 1921 he estimated that the SPNEA "has been a decided factor, I might almost say a deciding factor, in the preservation of some three or four dozen" houses. Those included his personal efforts in behalf of an architectural gem such as the Shirley-Eustis house in Roxbury which, although gutted of its fine interior, was "still the shell of the most magnificent colonial house now standing in New England." Since its Roxbury district was "rapidly going over to tenement houses" and an immigrant population, Appleton helped form the Shirley-Eustis House Association in 1913, served on its board

⁷⁷ Appleton to Nathaniel Jackson, July 8, 1920, Jackson House Acq. file, SPNEA; "Notes on the Jackson House," April 4, 1923, Jackson House H & B file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 13 (April 1923):175-181.

of directors and later was its treasurer.⁷⁸ When he appealed for public support through a circular letter, he suggested that the restored house would offer "an opportunity for inspiring patriotic, historic and social work"; it could become "a valuable centre for much patriotic-historic work of increasing interest to the older residents and of increasing value to the newer arrivals." After the Boston buildings commissioner threatened to tear the building down, Appleton pulled strings at the governor's office and the state legislature to exempt the wooden house from the city's building codes.⁷⁹ The attack upon this symbol of Anglo-Saxon culture by the immigrant-based machine, therefore, had been thwarted by traditionalists working through the state government. During the upcoming decade and beyond Appleton offered his advice and help to preserve this illustrious symbol of the past in a neighborhood of immigrants.

An equally, if not more important, symbol for traditionalist strength in Appleton's mind was Beacon Street which, according to E. Digby Baltzell, "symbolizes historical continuity, civic pride, and class authority" in Boston. While an adolescent, Appleton saw respected families fleeing from his home street to safer neighborhoods and since that time it had undergone further deterioration. His first opportunity as a preservationist to help protect the street, besides his earlier work to safeguard Bulfinch's capitol, came when the Parker-Inches-Emory house

⁷⁸ Appleton to Mrs. M. W. Thornburgh, October 29, 1921, Thornburgh file, SPNEA; Appleton to Annie B. Thiving, January 2, 1924, Shirley-Eustis House file, SPNEA; Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," p. 174.

⁷⁹ Appleton, Circular Letter, June 16, 1913, Circular Letter file, SPNEA; for Appleton's political string-pulling, see Mrs. L. B. Titus to Woodbury Langdon, June 28, 1915, and July 24, 1915, Shirley-Eustis House file, SPNEA. Titus, as secretary of the association and having grown up in the neighborhood, expressed her "grief" at "seeing strangers" handle the building and its contents so poorly.

at 40 Beacon Street, which was adjacent to his boyhood residence, went up for sale. "This is an event of more than usual importance," he reported to the Society in 1913, "for on the fate of this house may depend the future character of Beacon Street on the hill." Should the house give way to an apartment building as was rumored, he predicted that "the artistic unity of this, the best portion of the street, would be lost forever."⁸⁰ While his suggestion that some benefactor purchase it for the Society's headquarters came to naught, Appleton feared that its loss would further damage the traditionalist identity of Bostonians.

Appleton was equally active in helping preservation efforts in Connecticut, although the general policy of the SPNEA, as he noted, "has been to cooperate with some existing agency, thereby avoiding the ownership of the property." While preservation work there was "especially in the hands of the Colonial Dames," Appleton also worked with historical societies such as that of East Lyme where he encouraged the drive which had been undertaken by Celeste Bush to save the Thomas Lee house. That seventeenth-century dwelling intrigued the corresponding secretary since it was in its original condition and had, he claimed, "escaped that touch of mediocrity" associated with modern hands. The SPNEA's help with the Lee house campaign was "decisive," Appleton boasted, "and without it nothing could have been accomplished."⁸¹ The corresponding secretary also entered into a Connecticut fray when he heard rumors that the

⁸⁰ Baltzell, Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia, p. 386; [Appleton], "The Parker-Inches-Emory House," Bulletin 4 (August 1913):2.

⁸¹ Appleton to H. Wales Lines, March 13, 1919, Lines file, SPNEA; George M. Curtis to Appleton, May 22, 1913, Curtis file, SPNEA; Appleton to Celeste Bush, February 17, 1914, Thomas Lee House file, SPNEA; Appleton to H. Wales Lines, March 13, 1919, Lines file, SPNEA.

Bulfinch-designed capitol in Hartford would be demolished. Although he entered "an emphatic protest against such an act of vandalism," he privately acknowledged that he never expected the building to fall; but, he suggested, "it never does any harm to arouse all possible interest" in the building's safety.⁸²

The most adventurous project which attracted Appleton's attention was Wallace Nutting's creation of a Colonial Chain of Picture Houses in New England. This former minister-turned antiquarian, cited by one authority as "one of the most famous figures in the history of American [antique] collecting," worshiped the Anglo-Saxon's purity of design in colonial furniture and accordingly sought similar era buildings to serve as showcases for his pieces. Nutting in fact claimed that "antique furniture in a modern house is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout." After he organized an impressive chain of museums, Nutting credited Appleton for half of his acquisitions. "Without the knowledge of the Society's work," he wrote the corresponding secretary, "I should probably never have done any of this. The Haverhill house [the Hazen Garrison] and the Saugus house [the Iron Works house] I owe wholly to the Society, so far as calling my attention to them is concerned and the same is true of the [Cutler-] Bartlett house [in Newburyport]." Although Appleton reciprocated by calling Nutting "a first class friend of New England antiquities," he probably regretted the tribute when Nutting precipitously sold his Colonial Chain houses and furniture because of declining profits during wartime. The most impressive of these houses and an archi-

⁸²[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 5 (April 1914):10; Appleton to George M. Curtis, October 21, 1913, Curtis file, SPNEA.

tectural gem, the Wentworth-Gardner house of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was bought and its fine interior stripped by a museum.⁸³ The demise of Nutting's museums convinced Appleton even more that a private society such as the SPNEA was the only recourse to save effectively such a group of revered structures.

Whether in an advisory capacity or in active preservation work, Appleton voiced his Gospel of Preservation and it became the philosophy which shaped his SPNEA. Since he was a thoroughly ingrained Brahmin and earlier had been trained by Charles Eliot Norton, one of the foremost cultural critics of modernism, Appleton had learned to respect the material culture of the past as a document which intimately revealed the close connection between an individual and his times. The most powerful symbols for that old order were its extant, preserved buildings; what they represented were the values, virtues, and life conditions of the builder. Appleton was especially intrigued by the seventeenth century, a time when the medieval legacy was strong, the Anglo-Saxon race was virile, and the colonists lived simply and were devoted to their community.

Appleton and other traditionalists preached the Gospel of Preservation through the SPNEA to a twentieth-century New England which, they thought, was vitally out of touch with these cherished forebears and their customs.

⁸³Elizabeth Stillinger, The Antiquers: The Lives and Careers, the Deals, the Finds, the Collections of the Men and Women Who Were Responsible for the Changing Taste in American Antiques, 1850-1930 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. 190; Wallace Nutting to Appleton, September 30, 1915, Nutting file, SPNEA; Nutting to Appleton, February 26, 1915, Nutting file, SPNEA; Appleton to Nutting, September 25, 1915, Nutting file, SPNEA. Appleton, incidentally, thought that Nutting's claim of losing money on the resultant sale of these properties, and in particular the Saugus iron works, was fallacious. "If he wasn't lying then," Appleton said referring to Nutting's claim, "he is now"; Appleton, "Notes on a Conversation with Mr. Wallace Nutting," April 8, 1920, Saugus Iron Works file, SPNEA.

Historic preservation, therefore, became a tool to mold the present according to the traditionalists' standards. Far from retreating into the past as an escape, preservationists used the past to Americanize the immigrants, to teach their conservative and sometimes class-bound values to the lower orders, to unify the propertied classes and acculturate the new wealth, and thereby to harness the energy released into society by the dramatic changes associated with modernization. While traditionalists called their own efforts one of enlightenment and uplift, the other side of the coin was implicitly the control of the populace and the protection of responsible conservatism.

The values and order of the past, however, seemed strangely out of touch at times with the realities of the present. As the population of large New England cities democratically elected charismatic immigrant politicians and their machines, traditionalists would rally around the symbols of the past. They argued that these buildings illustrated the benefits brought by the leadership of the upper class who were trained by experience, enlightened by noblesse oblige, and deterred from corruption by their own wealth. New England at the same time experienced dramatic changes in the workplace. When workers turned to class demonstrations and unionization for protection against the factory's dehumanization and exploitation, traditionalists contended that workers should learn that hard work and disciplined individualism would lead to freedom and success, that a humble pride should be invested in one's work, and that community should come before self in their lives. Urbanization troubled traditionalists as well and they retorted with praise for the rural ideal. Notwithstanding the merits of trained leadership, hard work, and rural living, historic preservationists appeared to be quite partisan in their allegiance

to the past. Traditionalists championed conservatism and used the symbols of the past, therefore, as a counter to the changes associated with democratic politics, union collectivism, and the dominance of the city's mores and ways.

Historic preservation represented a determined effort to bring traditionalist precepts more into modern life. The past and its respected culture, in essence, became an anchor to calm, and sometimes to halt, the present. The preservation movement was institutionalized by private groups, like the SPNEA, which represented the traditional leaders of society. The past, and especially its material culture, became the fief of these preservationists, antiquarians, and traditionalists in a region apparently swayed by modernism. The past was not simply their possession, but also their hold upon the present. Serving as the disciples carrying the Gospel of Preservation, these traditionalists used the past, moreover, to assert the primacy of their families, their way of life, and their Anglo-Saxon culture over a New England suddenly turned heterogeneous. As a result, the gospel became the charge of private organizations representing select traditionalists who strove to reassert the hegemony of traditionalist culture in a rapidly changing land.

CHAPTER V
THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND
ANTIQUITIES AND THE MODERNIZATION OF
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

During the Progressive era and the immediate years thereafter many movements developed modern and professional approaches to their respective disciplines. In the field of historic preservation William Sumner Appleton and the SPNEA established a methodology in both management and restoration which essentially took American preservation out of the hands of amateurs and established it as a modern profession. What was so dramatically different about Appleton's implementation of the Gospel of Preservation from that of other preservationists were his demands that a scientific regimen and a businesslike organization be applied to historic preservation. Earlier he had been taught by mentors such as Charles Eliot Norton that the symbols of the Anglo-Saxon past were being devalued by whimsical restorations and callous uses. Later he was aided by some of New England's leading antiquarian architects, including Norman Isham and Joseph Chandler. This training and advice then prompted Appleton to undertake archaeological investigations, to employ trained professionals, and to document thoroughly the process of restoration. A professional approach and scientific method, Appleton hoped, would protect the integrity of these artifacts; consequently, their value as inherited cultural symbols would be honestly preserved.

Appleton improved the tenor of leadership, developed the management

of properties, and advanced the arguments in behalf of preservation as well during these formative years of the SPNEA. Demanding that fellow preservationists show energy, ambition, and persistence, he unabashedly preached a gospel of acquisitions and criticized societies which were content to preserve a mere one or two houses. In managing the SPNEA's properties he also developed techniques to raise money and maintain the properties through endowments, revolving funds, and leasing schemes. Unlike other preservationists who generally had turned their historic properties into museums, the SPNEA declared from the start that the actual preservation of a building was of prime importance. These properties could subsequently be used as inns, dwellings, or for other purposes which did not require alterations in the material and historical structure of the building. Again in contrast with many earlier preservationists, Appleton developed the argument that historic preservation was good for an area's business, tourism, and property values. Besides appealing to the sentimental notions of home, ancestry, and race, Appleton therefore struck a practical and economic chord in the New Englander's character.

Finally, the SPNEA promoted the public display of the material culture of old New England. Believing that historic buildings and artifacts were important for the ideas and stories which they told about the people who built and crafted them, Appleton considered them historical documents which, like contemporary books and manuscripts, provided insights into a distant past. Following the ideas for period rooms which had been developed by the Essex Institute and many European museums, he and George F. Dow organized the preserved past in period house displays which attempted holistically to present the cultural past. Appleton also

was the first major American preservationist to campaign, albeit unsuccessfully, for the creation of an open-air historical folk museum which, like later Plimouth Plantation and Colonial Williamsburg, would combine historical museums, crafts interpretations, and the ambiance of a lost era. Whether in the science of restoration, the leadership of the movement, the solicitation of funds, or in the uses of historical properties, the SPNEA under Appleton embarked upon and developed trend-setting techniques which became integral parts of modern-day historic preservation.

Managing an Organization: The Acquisitions
and Operations of the SPNEA

William Sumner Appleton, the workhorse and key figure of the SPNEA, carried most of the burdens involved in the acquisition of properties, the supervision of restorations, and the management of the Society. Although his close associate and distant cousin George Dudley Seymour chided him for being a member of "the leisure class," Appleton found little leisure but much satisfaction in this avocation turned vocation. "I find life far too short and the days altogether so," he confided to one benefactor, "with at least forty-eight hours work to be done in twelve." Since his work was done without salary and had saved the Society by 1926, according to his estimate, some \$50,000, he felt that "he had never been obligated to render long reports to his board, nor had he needed to ask permission to take certain kinds of actions."¹

¹George Dudley Seymour to Appleton, March 7, 1914, Seymour file, SPNEA; Appleton to Helen F. Kimball, May 23, 1923, Shirley-Eustis House file, SPNEA; Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), p. 254. While Appleton carried the brunt of the workload, others such as the trustees and vice presidents likewise received no salary. The museum director, counsel, and architects, however, were paid for their services. Later Appleton even inaugurated a

In his administration of the Society Appleton wanted as little interference as possible from the trustees. Knowing that their role often would be titular and that consequently most were unlikely to attend the meetings, he planned that "a quorum of the Board of Trustees is in our case five members, although the Board consists of thirty." He also devised a system of electing trustees which, he noted, "allows us to drop out unsatisfactory members from the Board without hurting anyone's feelings." Even when the Society's annual meeting was held Appleton also felt that poor attendance should not impede his business, whereby he felt "it is well to make the quorum an absurdly low one" so that the meeting could go on.²

Since Appleton categorically rejected the limited focus of one-house societies, he declared that the business of the SPNEA would be the acquisition each year of the best available houses. While he wanted the best, however, he realized that there was an element of chance in the acquisition process. "The very best may be in no danger today," he told the membership in 1916, "whereas the second best may be doomed unless instantly protected; or perhaps the third best may be offered on such exceptionally good terms as to make it wise to postpone the others for the moment. Such circumstances will not alter the rule; they will merely be exceptions to prove it. Great care should be shown in accepting houses of lesser merit and it may fairly be required that they come free

volunteer custodial system which, Bertram Little noted, "has proven perhaps the greatest single factor in enabling the increase in the number of historic houses under the Society's control"; see his "Pioneer in Historic Preservation: William Sumner Appleton," MS., n.d., Appleton file, SPNEA.

²Appleton to Frances E. D. Porteous, February 4, 1919, SPNEA. The APVA, on the other hand, had defined its quorum quite high in the 1890s and was often unable to conduct business.

of incumbrance and with repairs and restoration paid for."³

A dwelling offered to the Society as a donation which put this policy to a test was the Major John Bradford house (c. 1674) of Kingston, Massachusetts. Appleton fully supported the acquisition and reported: "The house is typical of the simplicity which was apparently universal in all the Pilgrim work throughout the Plymouth Colony. To some it might accordingly seem that the house is not worth bothering about; but a moment's reflection must convince every one that a house which was the home of one of the best-known Pilgrim families, and is thoroughly representative of the best work of the immediate descendants of the Pilgrims, must be the very kind of house for the preservation of which we exist." Despite Appleton's enthusiastic endorsement of the acquisition and an initial acceptance of the gift by the trustees, the board was swayed by a female member to demand terms which the donor refused. While Appleton was convinced that this was a mistake, he relented and probably learned to choose his trustees more carefully.⁴

Appleton was pragmatic and flexible as the Society acquired its buildings, either through donation or purchase. "Our own experience," he recounted, "has been so varied that no two of our properties were acquired or are managed in just the same way." He continually sought donations from benefactors and in this manner the Arnold house and Laws cottage were acquired. Some prospective donations fell through at the

³[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," The Bulletin of the SPNEA 8 (May 1916):14 (hereafter referred to as the Bulletin).

⁴[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 3 (July 1912):17; see also Appleton to Donald Millar, April 16, 1918, Millar file, SPNEA.

last moment, such as Wallace Nutting's gift of the Hazen Garrison house in Haverhill and J. P. Morgan, Sr.'s offer to present the grandiose "Lindens" of Danvers, Massachusetts.⁵ After the Society purchased the Swett-Ilsley house and was forced to borrow part of the necessary moneys from the Life Membership Fund, Appleton determined that the precedent would not be repeated "nor will any funds be appropriated from the income of the Society for the purchase of any real estate. Accordingly," he wrote, "whatever we acquire will mean an active campaign for that particular purpose, to be carried on by the friends of the particular piece of real estate in question." By 1921 he even suggested that these friends of the building should perform most of the legwork in the acquisition process. "The Board is pretty much in the position," he explained, "where it wants to have other people to do two-thirds of the work and then if the house seems worth while the Board will take the remaining third."⁶ Most likely his work overload led Appleton to allow others to do the spadework while he engineered the SPNEA's operation.

Important steps in the acquisition process were also secret investigations and price negotiations. Since Appleton distrusted the motives of the general public, he made it a general policy "not to mention in print the very best uncared-for work" in New England out of his quite

⁵[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Old-Time New England 11 (April 1921):182 (hereafter referred to as OTNE). Although Morgan had offered to purchase and donate "The Lindens," the owner withdrew the house from the market at the last moment. Appleton was satisfied that the building would be retained by the family owner and thereby preserved. He could not foresee, however, that it would be purchased and moved lock, stock, and barrel to Washington, D.C. in 1934.

⁶Appleton to Colonel Robert H. Goddard, November 16, 1912, Goddard file, SPNEA; Appleton to Henry W. Erving, February 15, 1921, Erving file, SPNEA.

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285

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realistic fear that speculators and profiteers might beat him to the punch. He advised Celeste Bush while she maneuvered to purchase the Thomas Lee house in East Lyme, Connecticut that secrecy was not only essential for *keeping the price down, but for the building's protection* from the populace as well. "We should keep this a still hunt till we are quite out of the woods," she replied in agreement. "We do not want a curious rabble invading the old house with lighted cigars and a desire to write names and carry off souvenirs." Appleton especially admired Nutting's abilities to calculate a building's worth and he tried to learn about price estimation and negotiation from him.⁷ Sometimes a wrench would be thrown into the SPNEA's purchase negotiations by a competing collector. As Appleton and Bolton negotiated the purchase of the Otis house, Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the Atlantic Monthly, negated the SPNEA's bid by offering to buy the house's woodwork for a rather sizable sum. A bidding war followed with the result being a considerably higher purchase price paid by the Society.⁸ The moral of the episode for Appleton was the need for absolute secrecy and an ample treasury for the preservationists as they acquired their properties.

Perhaps the most difficult price negotiations for Appleton involved his dealings with the recent immigrants who sometimes owned historic, albeit dilapidated and primitive, structures. True to the description of

⁷ Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation of Old Buildings in New England," Art and Archaeology 8 (May-June 1919):173 (hereafter referred to as "Destruction and Preservation"); Celeste Bush to Appleton, January 28, 1914, Thomas Lee House file, SPNEA; Appleton to Wallace Nutting, November 5, 1914, Nutting file, SPNEA.

⁸ The episode is recounted in Appleton to Mrs. Robert D. Evans, June 29, 1916 and Ellery Sedgwick to Appleton, December 13, 1916, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA.

the Brahmin who "would far rather be called a miser than a sucker," Appleton sometimes was rather unyielding in these negotiations. The disagreements which followed actually were as much cultural as economic. Not realizing, or possibly acknowledging, that most immigrants had come to America to win economic freedom or wealth, and that land speculation had been a traditional means to that end, Appleton would rather have had a building demolished than allow an immigrant a sizable profit. The Norton house in Guilford, Connecticut was a case in point. Although Appleton was intrigued by the colonial structure, he claimed that "the Polack family who owned the place could not be induced to part with it for less than \$4,000, tho I dare say it did not cost them over \$400." His claim, however, must have been an exaggeration because the house was eventually sold by the Pole for its timbers. The negotiations to acquire the Scotch-Boardman house years earlier involved similar difficulties with the poor Italian farmers who owned it. Warned by a realtor friend to secure the dwelling subrosa, Appleton had an Italian go-between purchase the building and the adjoining lots so that the price would not be inflated.⁹ Even after the SPNEA purchase Appleton continually worried that the Italians in the neighborhood would react harshly to the new Anglo-Saxon tenants.

The most crucial step in the acquisition process was fund raising

⁹Cleveland Amory, The Proper Bostonians (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1947), p. 175; for the Norton house see Appleton to George D. Seymour, August 1, 1921, Seymour file, SPNEA; for the Scotch-Boardman acquisition see particularly W. Welsh to Appleton, April 14, 1913 and Appleton to Lynde Sullivan, May 1, 1914, in the Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA. Prior to the SPNEA purchase Donald Millar inspected the building and had this exchange with an Italian owner. The Italian asked: "'You lika buy dissa house?'" to which Millar replied: "'No, because I have no money.'" The Italian's retort, Millar wrote Appleton, was: "To this he grinned and said with a tone of perfect understanding and sympathy--'Ah, jus lika me!'" see Millar to Appleton, January 21, 1915, Millar file, SPNEA.

for the purchase, repair, restoration, and maintenance of the property. After a lengthy debate within the Society whether funds should be raised locally or regionally, the trustees decided, in the words of Connecticut banker Henry W. Erving, that the SPNEA could not "successfully be a neighborhood concern" and must accordingly solicit the wherewithal for preservation from the entire membership. When Appleton courted the Society's friends and members for contributions he appealed not only to their reverence for tradition, but to their self-image as well. Early twentieth-century conspicuous consumption included philanthropy and had made it into a type of purchase. The corresponding secretary encouraged this by printing in the Bulletin a list of benefactors with the amount of their contribution for each campaign. These contributions became the lifeblood for the Society's acquisitions and restorations after Appleton abandoned his original plan of making "the fees of the Annual Members and the income of the Life Membership Fund . . . the sinews of war." Instead, he explained, "membership dues simply finance the management of the Society and the membership list gives us the names of people who are potentially willing and able to help along the cause. . . . In this way our work is directly dependent on the size of our membership list."¹⁰

Appleton tried fund raising through other lists as well when he targeted his appeals to ancestral descendants associated with these historic homes, fellow traditionalists in the patriotic and historical societies, and noted philanthropists. While he struggled to raise funds for the Bennett-Boardman house, he admitted in frustration to Heloise

¹⁰Henry W. Erving to Bolton, April 3, 1916, in Trustees file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "The SPNEA," Bulletin 1 (May 1910):7; Appleton to Frances E. D. Porteous, February 4, 1919, SPNEA.

Meyer: "We have already tried all of those [family] names in the New England telephone directories, with incredibly poor results. The trouble seems to be that none of this particular line of Boardmans ever made a cent. They seem to have been desperately poor while living in the house and none of the descendants seem to have had the knack of making money since." The Brown house descendants presented similar difficulties for the corresponding secretary because he could find none "who has more than car fare or two in his pocketbook."¹¹ What Appleton subsequently combed the genealogical records for was a link to the very wealthy Brown clan of Providence, Rhode Island.

Even when Appleton was able to secure the membership lists of other societies and charities, the results were sometimes disappointing. "We find here in Boston," he explained to Henry Sharpe, "that only a fraction of those interested in charities as a whole, care for historical or antiquarian matters, and doubtless the same holds good everywhere. The human appeal is what moves persons to act. Nevertheless, there must be a large quantity of others whom we haven't yet found who would be vulnerable to the antiquarian appeal." His frustration during the financially dry wartime period became such that he even considered hiring a professional solicitor, but their commissions ran as high as twenty-five percent. Bolton feared as well that a solicitor's tactics were incompatible with the SPNEA's sense of tradition and dignity. "It seems to me," he added, "bad policy and possibly unpatriotic to attempt this kind of campaign, when such matters as the Red Cross, the next Libery Loan, etc., are

¹¹ Appleton to Heloise Meyer, August 27, 1915, Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA; Appleton to George Peabody Wetmore, January 11, 1915, Brown House Scrapbook, SPNEA.

making a call upon the public for funds."¹²

Since broadly targeted appeals were not only expensive to produce but also somewhat unproductive in their results, Appleton concentrated more upon securing sizable contributions from select leaders. The Society's financial contributions from Rhode Island, he advised one vice president for example, could be increased by relying more upon "Who's Who In New England," the "Directory of Directors," and the "Social Register" for Providence. When Celeste Bush sought the SPNEA's help in the purchase of the Thomas Lee house, Appleton urged her to send personal letters with some half-tone pictures "to a couple of hundred wealthy and prominent people in Connecticut." Sometimes quick, decisive action necessitated the help of the very wealthy. When Appleton quietly maneuvered to buy the street lots fronting the Otis house, he admitted to Mrs. Henry L. Higginson, wife of the wealthy banker and principal benefactor of the Boston Symphony, that "we don't like to ask for small sums because many people would have to be asked--a thing to be avoided."¹³

Appleton had little luck, however, in engaging the interest of multi-millionaire philanthropists. Writing Donald Millar, an antiquarian and Episcopal clergyman from New York City who often helped the SPNEA, he humorously asked in 1916, "if you have any New York millionaire in tow, who is tame enough to eat out of your hand, and whom you have already

¹² Appleton to Henry D. Sharpe, December 3, 1921, Sharpe file, SPNEA; Bolton to Appleton, December 21, 1918, French file, SPNEA; see also Committee on Membership & Endowment Campaign Report, June 1, 1920, Trustee file, SPNEA.

¹³ Appleton to Henry D. Sharpe, December 3, 1921, Sharpe file, SPNEA; Appleton to Celeste Bush, January 16, 1914, Thomas Lee House file, SPNEA; Appleton to Mrs. Henry Lee Higginson, February 23, 1917, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA.

milked to your heart's content," because the SPNEA needed its own chance at the udder. As he engineered the drive to purchase the Scotch-Boardman house Appleton thought that its connections with the Scottish immigrants and iron industry should naturally appeal to no other than Andrew Carnegie. Even Appleton's understanding of the house's symbolism--representing the Protestant work ethic, the notion of work as the mainspring of freedom, and the maxim that personal strength was the key to success--accorded well with Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth. What Appleton proposed to a friend of the steel magnate was that "the whole property should be a memorial either to Mr. Carnegie or to the Scotch in America, or whatever would suit Mr. Carnegie's best, and his name would be attached to it in whatever way he required. It might be 'The Carnegie Memorial to the Scotch in America,' or something of that variety." Writing Carnegie directly Appleton explained: "To my mind there is something at once peculiarly pathetic and essentially inspiring in the position of these early Scotchmen. Sent here as a result of the defeat of their nation, their toil soon earned them their freedom and they joined the grand amalgam of races which later formed the American people, never losing their identity of race or name." The Scotch-Boardman house would become a memorial, he predicted, to the Scottish people, the iron industry, and Andrew Carnegie. Nineteen sixteen proved to be a bad year for the aging Carnegie, however, and his reply was "no."¹⁴

In these appeals to the highly wealthy, Appleton often evoked the idea of philanthropy as a conspicuous contribution to society and posterity.

¹⁴ Appleton to Donald Millar, May 16, 1916, Millar file, SPNEA; Appleton to Edward L. Tilton, September 22, 1916, Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA; Appleton to Andrew Carnegie, November 16, 1916 and Carnegie's reply of November 27, 1916, Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA.

"One of the best forms of memorial a man can possibly leave" to history, he claimed, was a preserved house. "Such a memorial has proved itself a never failing object of interest to all comers and one reflecting endless credit on those responsible for its achievement." Preaching the message in the Bulletin, the preservationist noted: "It would be difficult to conceive of a more noble object for philanthropy. The results of such benefaction would be apparent to everyone, scattered along the roadsides throughout these six states, and appropriately marked to show whose generosity their preservation was made possible." These appeals, however, achieved only limited success. Wealthy real-estate developer Arthur Lyman, for example, replied quite brusquely to a four-page plea from Appleton by stating that he was not interested "in very old houses." Even Harrison Gray Otis, publisher of the Los Angeles Times and a proud member of many ancestral and patriotic societies, responded to Appleton's request for help in the Otis house purchase with a "rather snappy letter, asking why Boston didn't raise its own money instead of falling back on him just because of his name." The corresponding secretary wanted to tap the Harkness family money which had been earmarked for philanthropy but did not know how to get a letter past their vigilant secretaries. These appeals to men of great wealth--such as Carnegie, Harkness, or even Otis--generally proved futile. Appleton instead relied upon the sons and daughters of New England's traditionalism who, unlike some sheltered millionaire magnates who lived in walled estates, saw daily the dramatic challenges to the region's sense of identity and place.¹⁵

¹⁵ Appleton to Harald W. Otsby, December 11, 1920, Otsby file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 3 (July 1912):21; Appleton to Arthur Lyman, January 3, 1919 and his reply January 7, 1919, Brown House file, SPNEA; for the Otis episode see Frank

The financial mainstays of the SPNEA, therefore, were established Yankee families whose wealth varied from the very affluent to the comfortable middle class. This was illustrated by a 1921 appeal issued primarily for the Otis house mortgage and the Arnold house endowment. Eliciting 446 contributions totaling \$9,254.56, the appeal indicated that a minority of the benefactors contributed a majority of the funds. One hundred fourteen contributors gave \$6,887.00; that is, 25.6 percent of the benefactors were responsible for 74.4 percent of all the revenues. The other 332 contributors donated \$2,367.56. If this financial analysis is carried further, 62 contributors, or 14 percent of the total number, gave \$5,587.00 or 60 percent of the contributions.¹⁶ The drive to purchase the Cooper-Austin house in Cambridge a few years earlier had brought out many sizable contributions as well; of the 46 benefactors giving \$50 or more, one half gave amounts of \$100 or more. The Otis house, the showcase for traditionalists' strength, really brought out the Brahmins' pocketbooks. A few minutes on the telephone, Bolton boasted, yielded \$15,000. Contributions of \$5,000 came from Emily Morison; Mrs. L. Vernon Briggs (nee Mary T. Cabot), wife of the noted physician; George R. White

H. Pettingell to Appleton, March 29, 1917 and his reply April 3, 1917, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA; for the Harkness story see Appleton to Henry W. Kent, November 10, 1922, Kent file, SPNEA. Kent, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, incidentally refused to use his influence with the Harknesses to help the SPNEA. The possibilities for philanthropic aid from these magnates were immense. During their lifetimes, John D. Rockefeller donated some \$600,000,000 while his son gave about \$400,000,000. Andrew Carnegie dispensed slightly less than \$325,000,000 and Henry Ford gave a mere \$37,500,000; see William Greenleaf, From these Beginnings: The Early Philanthropies of Henry and Edsel Ford, 1911-1936 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964), p. 7.

¹⁶Figures derived from "Annual Report of the Treasurer," OTNE 12 (October 1921):83-87. A further breakdown of these contributions reveals that 6.7 percent of the donors gave amounts of \$100 or more and accounted for 42.4 percent of the revenues; 7.2 percent gave \$50-99 or 18 percent of the total revenues.

a chemist and educator; and Mrs. Robert D. Evans, whose spouse was a mining executive and a trustee of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.¹⁷

Rather than rely upon membership fees or complicated individual campaigns for the historic preservation operations, Appleton instead hoped to establish and employ special accounts. In 1912 he proposed, for example, the creation of a revolving emergency fund to be used "as a temporary make-shift" for the quick rescue of endangered properties. This device, soon implemented with a benefactor's contribution, was at the time a novel idea, but revolving emergency funds would later become a common feature in the plans of preservation organizations.¹⁸ Appleton also suggested the establishment of various endowments, including a "geographical endowment" for the Berkshire region, an endowment to finance the survey and listing of historic homes in New England, and an "old house fund" to encourage smaller societies to undertake their own preservation efforts.¹⁹

¹⁷For the Cambridge house see Appleton to John G. Long, April 4, 1912, Long file, SPNEA. The only corporate contributor to this drive was the Boston Elevated Railway Company, a corporation which had suffered greatly in its public image during a franchise contest that was portrayed as one of the People versus the Trusts; see Richard M. Abrams, Conservatism in a Progressive Era: Massachusetts Politics, 1900-1912 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 71-72. For the Otis campaign see Appleton to George N. Black, June 29, 1916, Otis House Acq. I file, SPNEA; and Bolton, "Note-Book," May 24, 1916, Bolton Papers, MHS.

¹⁸[Appleton], "The Helen F. Kimball Emergency Fund," Bulletin 3 (February 1913):11. Appleton wondered how the APVA survived on its one dollar annual dues. Lora Ellyson, its president, replied somewhat smartly: "'The answer is, in numbers there is strength.'" Actually the membership of the SPNEA was as large as that of the APVA. The real differences involved the scope and intensity of the New England operation, and hence the higher costs; Ellyson quoted in "Mrs. Ellyson Reports on Work of Society," Richmond Times-Dispatch, January 7, 1917.

¹⁹For the geographical endowment see Appleton to Z. Marshall Crane, February 5, 1915, Appleton file, SPNEA; for the "old house fund" see Appleton to Heloise Meyer, May 18, 1922, Meyer file, SPNEA. Not all

In fact Appleton wrote a lengthy article in 1918 for Art and Archaeology "with the hope of interesting somebody somewhere in a endowment" to benefit not only the SPNEA, but also any other major preservation society. It was the role of these larger societies, he felt, to stimulate preservation activity and they needed sizable endowments to use as incentives. Believing that local action was always more effective in historic preservation, he wrote in the article: "It seems that a liberal grant in aid from the treasury of some strong organization holding trust funds would be all that would be needed" to stimulate local activity. The corresponding secretary even sought John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s philanthropy in 1926 in order to set up such an endowment, but this was to no avail because the philanthropist had already committed himself to the resurrection of Williamsburg.²⁰

Endowments were sought as well to maintain and restore the SPNEA's historic properties. While Appleton had believed in 1910 that the Society's properties could become profit-making ventures, the following years of experience definitely sobered that appraisal. Just as he comfortably lived off the annuity from his father's bequest, he realized that the yearly income of a house endowment would provide the wherewithal

preservationists, however, favored this reliance upon endowments. Henry Ford, who built his mythical Greenfield Village in the late 1920s, claimed in 1927 that an "endowment is an opiate to imagination, a drug to initiative. . . . One of the greatest curses to the country today is the practice of endowing this and endowing that. . . . Inertia, smug satisfaction, always follow endowments"; quoted in Greenleaf, From these Beginnings, p. 5.

²⁰ Appleton to Donald Millar, June 18, 1919, Millar file, SPNEA; the article incidentally was edited by Fiske Kimball; "Destruction and Preservation," pp. 181-183; for the bid to obtain Rockefeller's aid see Appleton to Judge Samuel H. Fisher, May 26, 1926, SPNEA.

for the structure's repairs and maintenance. "Experience has shown it to be highly unlikely that properties such as ours can ever be wholly self-supporting," he told the membership in 1921. "An average endowment of at least \$5,000 per property will always be necessary, and in the case of a period house, appropriately furnished and open to the public, an even larger sum will be required." Appleton's appeals for an endowment for each house, although not always successful, attempted to avoid a persistent pitfall in the nation's preservation movement. As Charles Hosmer explained, "the most disheartening realization that emerges from a study of the economic side of the American preservation movement is the fact that the majority of people who saved old houses did not understand that the word 'preservation' really meant maintenance of the structures throughout the years that followed."²¹

Wartime stifled contributions to the Society so much that Appleton even sought to create an endowment to run its daily operations. When Appleton joined that appeal with a pledge to invest the moneys in war bonds, Samuel P. Avery of Hartford promised to donate \$10,000 if the SPNEA could raise \$15,000 for an endowment for the general purpose of the Society. This succeeded and boosted the organization's finances through those most pressing times. The corresponding secretary sought a general endowment as well to enable the Society to avoid the yearly budget deficits, most of which he had assumed out of his own pocket. Finally in 1921 he wrote to Bolton that he had not picked up that shortfall for the last two years. "I shall fall out of the habit of assuming it

²¹[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 11 (April 1921):168. Although Appleton wanted an endowment for each property, this did not prevent him from accepting a valuable house which lacked one. Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 292.

personally," he wrote, "and that probably is really the best thing that can happen for the Society's best interest." Notwithstanding the deficit, the SPNEA's financial condition was "perfectly moral," he claimed. "To a certain extent we are like a gentleman who has got used to living up to a certain standard of income, by no means an extravagant one, but nevertheless, a moderately comfortable standard, in which simple wants have been met with a minimum of red tape, but from which all expensive tastes have been wholly eliminated."²²

Appleton also pioneered in the appeal for and use of bequests in behalf of historic preservation. The Society would "act as trustee in perpetuity" for homes which might fall into indifferent or callous hands. By 1920 he had been so successful in arranging bequests, he explained, that "this branch of our work promises to exceed in importance that actually accomplished as the result of campaigns for specific houses."²³ When it came to fund raising and financing the organization, therefore, Appleton's use of the bequest, various endowments, and a revolving emergency fund were clearly innovative and usually successful in underwriting the ambitious agenda which he set.

The SPNEA introduced modern methods of property management as well into the preservation movement. Since preservation and protection from the marketplace were his primary objectives, Appleton declared from the start that the Society would put the buildings "to whatever use may turn

²²For the Avery contribution see Appleton to George A. Plimpton, July 22, 1922, Plimpton file and Appleton to Mary Wheelwright, July 15, 1918, Brown House file, SPNEA; Appleton to Bolton, December 29, 1921, Bolton file, SPNEA.

²³[Appleton], "Notes," Bulletin 3 (March 1911):6; Appleton to Preston Pond, July 13, 1920, Pond file, SPNEA.

out to be most feasible." Dwellings would be leased under wise restrictions "to the best class of tenants." Life tenancy could be granted, moreover, to owners who either donated or sold their historic homes to the Society. As in the case of the Fowler house, the two Misses Fowler, both elderly and unmarried, deeded their home to the SPNEA under the proviso that they be given life occupancy.²⁴ In the subsequent years part of the building was used for early nineteenth-century period displays, while the rest remained the private quarters of the Fowlers.

The most ancient and primitive buildings presented the greatest difficulties for modern uses. The Eleazer Arnold house, for example, had been deeded to the Society under the provisions that it "should never be made use of commercially; that it should never be rented as a tenement, and that its repair and upkeep should never be neglected." Obviously a profitable use had been ruled out not only by the deed restrictions, but by the house's rustic condition as well because Appleton felt that "it would be a pity to . . . install a heating plant and plumbing in a house of this character. On the other hand," he continued, "their absence makes the place less desirable from the point of view of a tenant or caretaker and it becomes a question whether without them we can get the type of tenant we want." Years later the Arnold house was still a "financial liability" and the Society was forced to construct a modern caretaker's cottage.²⁵

²⁴Appleton to Edward Tuck, November 28, 1911, Tuck file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 8 (May 1916):13; Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., has mistakenly given credit for the "innovation" of a "life interest" to Rev. W. A. R. Goodwin as he persuaded Williamsburgers to relinquish their homes to Rockefeller's holding company; see his Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), p. 25.

²⁵For the deed restrictions see "Antiquarians Preserve Old Arnold

Most likely the Scotch-Boardman house created the greatest worries for Appleton when he tried to lease and restore the dwelling. After the Society purchased it subrosa, he feared for the building's safety and warned that "we must do nothing to lead anyone to believe that the Society owns the place, so the Society's name must not appear on any of . . . [the 'To Let'] signs." With the help of the local constable he evicted the Italian farmer occupants and then sought a "responsible American couple" as caretakers who would occupy the house "every instant on account of the Italians in the vicinity."²⁶ What caused the difficulty in securing a caretaker was Appleton's plan not "to put any modern improvements in the house if we can possibly avoid it," he wrote Donald Millar. "We don't want a telephone, or running water, a toilet room, or gas, or electric lights, or furnace, or in fact anything at all." In order to accommodate a caretaker, therefore, a modern cottage had to be constructed alongside. Maintenance and restoration costs were further boosted by Appleton's fear of vandalism. "Our neighbors are callabrian Italians who are not famous for their good behavior," he explained, and that necessitated erecting "an unclimable fence set on metal or concrete

House," Providence Journal, July 29, 192[3?], typescript of newspaper account in Arnold House file H & B, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 10 (October 1919):5; "To the Rhode Island Members of the SPNEA," circular letter dated April 7, 1928, Arnold House file H & B, SPNEA.

²⁶ Appleton to Lynde Sullivan, November 6, 1913, Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA; for the constable's eviction see Appleton to Mrs. George Early, January 21, 1916, Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file and Appleton to Millar, November 4, 1915, Millar file, SPNEA; for the caretaker see [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 12 (April 1922):167 and Appleton to E. B. Newhall, n.d., Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA.

posts" to protect not only the house, but the stone wall as well.²⁷

While Appleton's attitude bordered upon a siege mentality concerning this Saugus house, fortunately for his health the other properties of the Society proved easier to administer.

Although Appleton believed that old buildings should have new uses, he maintained firmly that the historical qualities of a structure must be respected. Any notion of adaptive reuse, therefore, was conditioned upon the protection of a building's aesthetic and architectural features. The Otis house, for example, became the Society's headquarters, library, and museum, but Appleton insisted that the restoration be accorded first priority. Since the Cooper-Austin house in Cambridge was only partially restored, on the other hand, it could easily accommodate the tenant's plan for an artist's studio, although Appleton feared that the lady artist had "rather promiscuous" affairs also going on under his roof!²⁸ The Society's first acquisition, the Swett-Ilsley house, proved difficult to lease, but after a long period of ill-kept appearances and vacancy, it became a tea room and curio shop. The SPNEA's use of historical properties was obviously different from the customary approach of earlier preservationist societies which had converted most dwellings into museums. Yet these diverse uses accorded well with Appleton's interpretation of the Gospel of Preservation. Historic buildings, he

²⁷ Appleton to Millar, May 6, 1916, Millar file, SPNEA; Appleton's fears of vandalism were warranted; in one incident about eighty panes of glass were broken by a gang of boys; see [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 12 (April 1922):167.

²⁸ Appleton to J. C. Flammand, March 14, 1914, Cooper House file H & B, SPNEA; the Cooper-Austin house was also used occasionally by family associations who assembled to honor their ancestors who had been associated with the building.

claimed, should first be preserved and then neatly woven into the fabric of a community. While each neighborhood could hardly support a museum, it could patronize a tea room, a curio shop, or an artist's studio. The neighborhood's visual texture thus would be enriched and the community's ties reaffirmed to the New England of Harrison Gray Otis, Samuel Fowler, John Cooper, and others symbolized by the preserved buildings.

Setting the Pace for Preservationists:
The Leadership Role of the SPNEA

An important tenet in Appleton's implementation of the Gospel of Preservation was the absolute necessity for a dynamic and energetic society acting as a model for the smaller local societies. Since his policies accordingly entailed an open-ended plan for property acquisitions, he was accused of being impractical by Henry W. Erving, a former vice president. "I can but think, Mr. Appleton, that the aims and desires perhaps of the Society are almost too ambitious," Erving wrote. "I don't think it possible for it to take up every old house that is offered however meritorious or otherwise; they [the SPNEA] will always be on the verge of bankruptcy and unable to carry out their plans satisfactorily any-where. . . . My idea of the Society's function is that it should have two or three bits of property--the best obtainable--and do the very best thing--everything that is necessary in fact--to those particular places." Appleton retorted that his plans had been misconstrued. "We don't, by any means, aim to get a monopoly on the earth's surface and are, on the contrary, only too glad when some other society offers to step in and take something which we would otherwise have to work on ourselves." The SPNEA in fact should exert its leadership, the preservationist added, by acquiring some other valuable properties which he had

in mind. Whether or not the trustees would agree with him, he joked: "My ghost will very much enjoy seeing what the Board does with these various properties as they come to its attention and perhaps you and I will be able to join hands, above or below, and contemplate the situation together."²⁹

Appleton believed that the SPNEA, as a strong centralized society, should lead the pace of preservation activity. Critical of decentralized organizations, including the APVA, he advised one preservationist that if her society worked "through chapters scattered all over your state," the result would be that "your energies will be frittered away quite hopelessly and each chapter will consider itself entitled to the entire income of any year." Rather than subsuming local interest, what a strong centralized society should do was kindle it. "What we need," Appleton wrote George Curtis, "is merely an endowment large enough to enable us to give the impetus to those undertakings which shall lead local organizations to do the rest." The Society's trustees earlier had attempted to implement that idea in 1912 when they had voted "to spend every year some part of the membership dues from each New England state within the limits of such state."³⁰ Yet, Appleton acknowledged, to really prime the pump

²⁹ Henry W. Erving to Appleton, February 14, 1921, and Appleton's reply of February 15, 1921, Erving file, SPNEA. Ironically Wallace Nutting had accused Appleton a year earlier of timidity in the Society's acquisitions. After Appleton had passed over the Saugus Iron Works house, Nutting wrote the corresponding secretary that "perhaps you thought you preserved all you wanted to"; Nutting to Appleton, April 16, 1920, Saugus Iron Works file, SPNEA.

³⁰ Appleton to Mrs. C. A. Gosney, July 6, 1939, North Carolina Society for Preservation file, SPNEA; Appleton to George M. Curtis, November 27, 1914, Curtis file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Work in Each New England State," Bulletin 4 (August 1913):28; a decade later fifty percent of these dues were apportioned to the state accounts.

of preservation activity a sizable endowment was an absolute necessity.

Expecting local societies to be as energetic as his own, Appleton had little tolerance for lethargic preservationists or societies which complacently held a solitary historic property while valuable buildings crumbled nearby. "Any real meritorious old house in the country," he claimed, "can be preserved if only a few people of the neighborhood will its preservation sufficiently strongly to bring it about. You know how some people will magnify difficulties until they seem to be unsurmountable, while others tackle them as if they were only a challenge to be taken up and overcome. Much depends on the personality of the people involved. But for weak knees in many directions fully twice as many fine old houses would today be standing in New England."³¹ Appleton was particularly perturbed by historical societies that did little to aid the preservation movement. As a contrast, he lauded the work of the Essex Institute and the Lexington Historical Society for combining preservation and historical studies in their programs.

What Appleton advised was a "gospel of further acquisitions" whereby a local society would acquire as many historic structures as possible. Demanding energy and ambition, he criticized one local society for its complacency. "The experience of other societies," he wrote, "simply proves that the more responsibility a society assumes--that is, the more signs of ambition and life it displays--the greater the support it receives from its friends and the public. Further, it must certainly become more and more the accepted duty of historical societies to take steps to prevent the loss of historic and worthy buildings in their home territories." The

³¹ Appleton to Henry C. Mercer, June 19, 1922, Mercer file, SPNEA.

dictum which he applied to the SPNEA fit the other societies as well: "Peace and rest and quiet are of the graveyard but not for living, growing organizations such as ours. It was the great librarian, Justin Winsor, who said that the only library with room enough was a dead library, and the same remark applies to an antiquarian society."³²

Occasionally Appleton's demanding expectations and leadership ran afoul of other preservationists and led to sharp antagonisms. A clash occurred between Appleton and Lillie B. Titus stemming from her administration of both the Howland House Association (HHA) and the Shirley-Eustis House Association (SEHA). Titus had asked for the SPNEA's help when the HHA proposed restoring the seventeenth-century Howland house of Plymouth "to the style of the olden days." Appleton personally countersigned a bank note for her and gave her some advice on the restoration work. The advice was promptly disregarded when she personally ordered that much of the old work be ripped out of the house during her romantic restoration. When the bank note became past due and Titus seemed unconcerned, Appleton had his attorney bring the matter to court. Then the clash erupted.³³

Rumors abounded that the house would be sold at a sheriff's auction, and indeed one was scheduled, in order to pay back the debt. Some members of the HHA even accused Appleton of engineering the default so that he could purchase the house for the SPNEA at the auction. Another irate member, a bank executive from Illinois, brusquely asked: "Do you think

³² Appleton to E. J. Frothingham, September 14, 1918, Hazen Garrison file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 11 (April 1921):188.

³³ Lillie B. Titus to C. K. Bolton, April 28, 1912, Howland House file, SPNEA.

you have a right to be Cor[responding] Sec[retary] of the Society for the preservation of New England Antiquities?" Appleton responded quite diplomatically to the latter query and praised the "good friends" of the HHA who had come to the house's rescue. While he was "unwilling to put into writing" some "additional circumstances" which prevented him from having "a lenient frame of mind," most likely Appleton did not care for Titus's calibre of leadership--her disregard for original materials, her romantic restoration, and her incompetent handling of the HHA's finances --and this led him to tighten the noose.³⁴

Titus and Appleton had another fray two years later over the administration of the Shirley-Eustis house. Again Appleton was displeased by her handling of the restoration and the SEHA's finances. As Titus recounted the denouement of the episode, Appleton "very coolly informed me that he did not intend to have me serve any longer as [SEHA's] secretary, [and] that he intended to have some 'new brooms' for the offices." Although Appleton was not then a member of the SEHA, she claimed, he "proceeded to nominate a list of officers for election" at the annual meeting and the excluded Titus was "very much embarrassed." Rather than interpret Appleton's move as a professional disagreement, Titus saw it entirely in personal terms. "It must be clear . . . ," she wrote, "that he wanted to get square with me for showing him up to the public, when he tried to get possession of the old Howland House." Titus claimed, in fact, that "no one wants to work with Appleton [because] . . . he is so domineering."

³⁴ Albert H. Plumb to [Appleton], March 10, 1915, Howland House file, SPNEA; John C. Foote to Appleton, March 9, 1915, Howland House file, SPNEA; Appleton to Foote, March 11, 1915 and March 17, 1915, Howland House file, SPNEA. The house was not sold at auction, but Appleton lost forty dollars on the transaction!

For that matter, she continued, "Appleton intended to try to absorb this house, as he has tried to do with others."³⁵

While Titus definitely had a bad case of sour grapes, her accusations should be taken seriously. Concerning her claim that no one wanted to work with Appleton, that "no one" was herself because Appleton was besieged by other preservationists and correspondents requesting his help. Yet her claim that the corresponding secretary was domineering as a preservationist was more on the mark. Although Appleton generally was very affable and extremely diplomatic, he refused to tolerate slipshod preservation work. In this case his demanding principles clashed with what he considered to be not simply the incompetence of Titus, but also her unprofessional manner as a preservationist. Appleton indomitably maintained that preservation must be run as a business--efficiently, energetically, and scientifically--in order to prosper.

Appleton voiced his principles and the Society's Gospel of Preservation in the Bulletin, a publication which was expanded after 1920 and renamed Old-Time New England (OTNE). The corresponding secretary, acting also as editor through the Society's first decade, clearly pronounced his belief that historic preservation should be firmly buttressed by archaeological principles, an appreciation for the aesthetics of architecture, a compassion for colonial forebears, and a professional and energetic approach to the discipline. These were the foundation stones on which he would establish the gospel. Appleton admitted, however, that his pedagogical mission through the Bulletin was difficult. "It is very hard to strike an even mean which avoids too much technicality in wording

³⁵Lillie B. Titus to Mrs. Paul Hamlin, February 6, 1917, Shirley-Eustis file, SPNEA.

and at the same time makes such articles worthy of being put into print," he wrote Donald Millar. "I have the greatest contempt for the popular trash that is so often printed about old houses and would rather print nothing than something of only temporary interest." When the Society published OTNE, "A Quarterly Magazine Devoted To The Ancient Buildings, Household Furnishings, Domestic Arts, Manners And Customs, And Minor Antiquities Of The New England People," George F. Dow, formerly of the Essex Institute, undertook most of the editorial duties. Appleton had mixed feelings about the new format. Unlike the Bulletin which had been a medium to promote architectural preservation and his gospel, OTNE became more of a scholarly journal devoted to New England's culture. Appleton "feared that future members of the S.P.N.E.A. might consider themselves subscribers to a magazine rather than supporters of an active organization."³⁶ Historic preservation needed energetic evangelists and promoters, Appleton believed, not detached observers.

It was axiomatic, Appleton regularly maintained, that these active organizations and preservation corporations, rather than private individuals or the federal government, should be charged with historic preservation duties. "The most casual knowledge of the fate of old buildings," he wrote in Art and Archaeology, "shows the uncertainty of such private tenure" by churches, clubs, patriotic societies, and even descendant families. "The vicissitudes of private ownership" caused by demands for modern improvements or changes in actual tenancy, he added, have continually threatened this heritage. Ownership by the federal government, according to Appleton, proved equally dangerous to historic properties. When rumors

³⁶ Appleton to Donald Millar, March 5, 1915, Millar file, SPNEA; Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 250.

were floated that a neglected Monticello might be acquired by the United States government, Appleton predicted that if it were placed "in the hands of the national Congress" it would become "the foot ball of politics." Although Appleton considered himself "an ardent Jeffersonian in his principles," he felt "that Jefferson would turn in his grave at the mere suggestion that the Federal Government should buy his home by right of eminent domain." Appleton however was far from satisfied with the work of some preservation corporations. In 1923 he chided the APVA for "the neglect of your public buildings, especially [the] courthouses." While he acknowledged their past contributions, he felt that they needed more experienced and professional guidance in their preservationist undertakings. Yet Virginia's architectural and historical heritage was so "wonderful," a disgruntled Appleton wrote Lora Ellyson, "if it is to be saved I imagine it will have to be through your agency or not at all."³⁷

Although Appleton opposed the federal government's use of eminent domain to acquire Monticello in 1912, six years later he wrote and in 1919 introduced an amendment to the Massachusetts constitution empowering the use of eminent domain to protect ancient monuments. "'The preservation and maintenance of ancient landmarks and other property of historical or antiquarian interest is a public use,'" the amendment read, "'and the Commonwealth and the cities and towns therein may, upon payment of just compensation, take such property or any interest therein under such regulations as the General Court may prescribe." Appleton then organized a ratification drive and urged every SPNEA member and historical society

³⁷ Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," pp. 155, 181; Appleton to Mrs. Martin W. Littleton, October 28, 1912, and November 4, 1912, Monticello file, SPNEA; Appleton to Mrs. J. Taylor Ellyson, June 13, 1923, APVA file, SPNEA.

to vote for the referendum. In spite of his fears that there was "a lot of dead wood" in these kindred societies, most endorsed Appleton's amendment and it was eventually ratified by the populace.³⁸ Massachusetts thereby became the first state to add to its constitution such a sweeping provision in behalf of historic preservation. What probably stirred Appleton to act was not simply his fear that historic structures were endangered everywhere during wartime, but also his vivid remembrances that the magnificent Hancock house and the primitive Norton house had been toppled by owners indifferent to the community's wishes. This constitutional amendment would be invoked, therefore, as a last resort to save a threatened building.

A more dramatic gesture in behalf of threatened historical monuments was made in 1914 when he headed a drive to have the United States government protect and defend Europe's antiquities from the belligerents' destruction. After receiving an appeal from a European society, the SPNEA passed a set of resolutions which it sent to President Woodrow Wilson, every Massachusetts congressman, and all the patriotic and historical societies in New England. Seeking Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's aid and advice, Appleton explained that, according to newspaper accounts, "the public buildings of Antwerp were saved owing to the American consul putting into the hands of the attacking German commanding officer a plan of the city with every important monument distinctly marked, so that the guns could be turned to avoid them." After the president had failed to acknowledge his resolutions, Appleton fumed that "nothing that he has ever done shows

³⁸ Amendment cited in [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 10 (October 1919):18-19; Appleton to Rev. Glenn Tillery Morse, October 21, 1917 [sic], should be 1918, Bay State Historical League file, SPNEA.

the least reason for believing that he personally cares a snap for any architectural monuments, or even knows the meaning of the word." Appleton even went so far as to suggest that the American consuls in Europe should take over these monuments, such as the Rheims Cathedral, so that the French would not use them as observation towers. "The American flag flying from the towers would have been a guarantee that the French were not using the towers as observation posts to the cost of German lives," he wrote Barrett Wendell. Possibly, an entire city could have been neutralized under the American flag "and put out of the field of operations in the same way." In Appleton's opinion "peace is of itself the antiquarian's best friend" and, echoing the theme of a war to end all wars, "a peace that would make future wars impossible would from his point of view be the best."³⁹

Although Appleton proclaimed peace as the antiquarian's best friend, he nonetheless defended America's decision to go to war. Even while his own petition was before the president, Appleton refused to sign another petition to keep America at peace. When war was declared and Mary North-end, the popular writer on colonial architecture, blamed the capitalists and politicians for America's involvement, he retorted with a patriotic burst that he "wholly disagree[d] with you that this war is one 'of greed brought about by Wall Street and politicians.'" Moreover, the war was justified for "the country faces a danger greater than it has ever faced

³⁹ Appleton to Henry Cabot Lodge, November 30, 1914 and October 20, 1914, Lodge file, SPNEA; for these resolutions see Appendix II. Ironically the resolutions were endorsed by most societies except those of the architects and the large museums. Appleton thought that this was "so remarkable" that he wanted, but refrained, "to make their action public" in order to embarrass them; see Appleton to Barrett Wendell, January 13, 1915, Wendell file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 10 (October 1919):21.

before." Rather than blaming the capitalists, he in fact accused "the Pacifists" of blocking a plan for "thorough preparedness" and thereby letting down the nation's guard.⁴⁰ Appleton obviously had a difficult time juxtaposing his determination to protect antiquities from war and his equal determination to rally around the flag. His intense conservatism propelled him to the former while his unquestioning patriotism drew him to the latter.

What really rocked both Appleton's and Bolton's hopes for peace were the fears of revolutionary radicalism from 1917 through 1920. Upon hearing of the revolution in Russia, Bolton wrote: "No one in the future can know the chill at one's heart that such words bring in these terrible times." Even after war's end the threats to society increased during these "trying times indeed." Gripped by uncertainty and fear he wrote: "The crippling of the Railroads by strikes, the threats of soviet gov't in the Plumb bill, and the crude theory that the less hours each man works the more work there will be for all, makes us wonder what is in store for us. . . . Oh for a month of Grover Cleveland!" The strikes came closer to home in 1919 when the Boston police went out and property holders feared the worst scenarios. The SPNEA president felt that "the masses of idle men keeps one's nerves on edge." "The mall opposite Park St. was alive with evil looking fellows all playing 'craps' or some other gambling games." Such occurrences and threats to order made Bolton "shiver." As the election approached in November 1919, Bolton asked: "Is all this the natural aftermath of war or is it the entering wedge of revolution?"

⁴⁰For the petition see Appleton to Wesley Weyman, March 19, 1915, Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA; Mary H. Northend to Appleton, May 12, 1917, and Appleton's reply of May 16, 1917, Northend file, SPNEA.

Election results proved to his liking since it turned out to be "a great victory for Coolidge, law and order."⁴¹ Bolton and Appleton clearly saw that their world of tradition, deference, and order had been thrown further into tumult by the war and its disruptions. Most likely their commitment to historic preservation and conservatism intensified when faced with these challenges. Deeply impressed by traditionalism, they believed that the values and norms of the past--as reified in its buildings--had to be reaffirmed in the present.

In their leadership of the New England preservation movement Appleton and the SPNEA also maintained that the preservation of historic buildings was a solid economic contribution to a community. When Appleton advanced this argument he refuted the current notion that old buildings were both obstacles to development and symbols of an antiquated people. He contended instead that preserved buildings generated taxes and revenues for the community. When word was announced that the Connecticut state government was considering the demolition of the Bulfinch-designed Capitol, he wrote in the Bulletin:

It was merely a repetition of the old question of the aesthetic and sentimental versus the commercial and as usual many so-called "practical" persons were unable to gauge the financial possibilities of attractive antiquities. Philadelphia, Boston, Salem, and Concord, among other places, have long since learned why the annual swarms of tourists visit them and accordingly their attractions are cared for with appreciative intelligence. . . . It is the quantity of such attractions that bring tourists in numbers, hence every attraction counts.

While he regularly argued that the business community benefited most from preservation activity, he noted that preserved homes offered other economic

⁴¹Bolton, "Note-Book," March 16, 1917, August 11, 1919, November 2, 1919, and November 4, 1919, Bolton Papers, MHS.

and aesthetic amenities to a town. "What makes one town more attractive than another as one's home is the sum total of its attractive features, and among these," he claimed, "such assets as . . . [the restored home] must always take high rank." Even the Boston Chamber of Commerce acknowledged Appleton's work and claimed that "times have changed and [business]men see the wisdom of preservation."⁴²

At times Appleton was unwilling to confront developers who threatened historic structures. After interviewing the corresponding secretary, a Boston Chamber of Commerce writer concluded: "In their work the [preservationist] officials endeavor to place equal stress upon the idealistic and the practical. They would not preserve where impractical. They would not stand in the way of commercial growth. Where expansion demands that a place of little importance be torn down the officials do not hold off and insist upon its remaining. In such a case they would endeavor to move the building elsewhere--thus meeting the situation in the light of good common sense." Typical of that approach was Appleton's decision not to help in the preservation of the Payne house in Worcester and his conclusion "that the best use to which the land could be put would be for the erection of a mass of three-deckers." Even a threat to demolish the Watson-Davenport house, located on rapidly developing Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, elicited a half-hearted response from Appleton. While the house was in "perfect condition," had a "combined structural merit with historic interest," and was associated with "the stirring events of April

⁴²[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 8 (May 1916):24; John H. Batchelder, et al. to Mr. John Doe, February 14, 1924, a circular letter written by Appleton, Jackson House Acq. file, SPNEA; Harris Walter Reynolds, "Saving Old Landmarks, What It Is and Who Does It," Current Affairs, March 3, 1924.

19, 1775," the corresponding secretary nonetheless seemed resigned to the building's loss with the commercial expansion of Massachusetts Avenue.⁴³ Apparently Appleton believed that the battles for preservation were best fought where economic development was not directly challenged, especially during the Coolidge Twenties when business was king. One of Appleton's unwritten rules, therefore, was not to bite a hand which fed the Society. Since Boston was a commercial and financial center, the SPNEA needed the support and contributions which many of its businessmen provided. He hoped that in time he could educate them about the real values of historic buildings and the Gospel of Preservation.

Appleton's pragmatic use of historic preservation as an economic booster came out also during the Pilgrim Tercentennial of 1920-1921. As early as 1912 he had served on a subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Cooperation in Patriotic Work which petitioned the Massachusetts legislature to celebrate the event. In 1916 he said privately, however, that the cultural exhibition which had come out of the planning "sound[ed] like a lot of poppycock nonsense"; what he wanted instead was "the kind of fair that brings [the] most people to Boston, and booms business most effectively." By the time the tercentenary celebration was held other SPNEA members, on the other hand, considered it to be a means by which "to live over again in pageant our settlement of this country" and to reaffirm the colonial traditions. Even Appleton's long-time friend Charles W. Eliot, who would soon after declare the SPNEA's labors to be "a work of piety," considered the tercentenary for which he officiated

⁴³ Reynolds, "Saving Old Landmarks," Current Affairs, March 3, 1924; for the Payne house see Appleton to Mrs. E. M. Roberts, May 20, 1913, Roberts file, SPNEA; for the Watson house, see [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 12 (April 1922):179, 180.

to be an ideal vehicle to educate the populace and regenerate the old traditions. "'The people must be taught,'" he declared, "'the insidious dangers that threaten and be encouraged to combat the dogmas of ultra-radicalism--anarchy, Bolshevism, communism--and other misleading sophistries which now attack the very life of our Republic.'"⁴⁴ The Pilgrim Tercentennial obviously evoked different sentiments from the SPNEA's leaders and members. At root, however, all wanted the Pilgrims' history to become a spur in the community. A consciousness of this colonial history would benefit the campaign to preserve the past.

Whether one considers Appleton's arguments that historic preservation was an economic booster for the community, that strong preservation corporations were needed to protect this historical heritage, or that dynamic and energetic action must be undertaken to offset the rapid pace of change, it was apparent that Appleton wanted the SPNEA to act as a pacemaker for other preservationist efforts. He further realized that stimuli must be created to expand the scope of historic preservation. His gospel of acquisitions, the amendment to the state constitution, and the pump-priming endowments were designed mostly to encourage other traditionalists to become involved in the struggle to protect the past and its traditions. Appleton's calibre of leadership, moreover, became the model for these other efforts. Thoroughly professional, businesslike, and resourceful, the corresponding secretary cast a long shadow over the emerging field of historic preservation in New England. Modern methods

⁴⁴ Appleton to Paul Hamlen, n.d., [1916], Trustees file, SPNEA; Thomas P. Robinson, "The Historic Winslow House," OTNE 11 (January 1921):107; "Report of the Annual Meeting," OTNE 11 (April 1921):163; Eliot quoted in "Plan 100 Per Cent Pilgrim Memorial," n.d., no source, dateline Plymouth, July 17, 1920, in President's Report of Meetings, 1919-1920, APVA.

and leadership were essentially used to regenerate and popularize the old traditions.

Towards a Scientific Method in Preservation
and Restoration

By 1910 the regimen and sophistication of American preservation work remained at rudimentary levels. Most earlier efforts had been ad hoc in their planning, undisciplined in their methods, and amateurish in their outlook. What the field lacked was both a philosophy and methodology to instruct preservationists about the technical and scientific nature of preservation work. During the first decade of the SPNEA, however, Appleton began to remedy this through a construct of his ideas about the nature of preservation, techniques of investigation and documentation, crafts artistry and history, and the general discipline of archaeology. In the process he gradually moved the SPNEA towards a scientific method in its preservation and restoration work. Appleton actually pulled together remnants of his past and present experiences: his training under Norton and Ross, his knowledge of European preservation practices and in particular the principles of England's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), a steady stream of advice from antiquarian architects such as Norman Isham and Joseph Chandler, and lessons from some of his own experimentation on the early acquisitions of the SPNEA. The manner in which he implemented his Gospel of Preservation, therefore, was like few American preservationists before him. The valuable architecture of New England, as the symbol of tradition and history, would be preserved according to the principles of archaeological study, scientific method, and antiquarian fidelity. Since these preserved buildings were not only an inspiration for the present, but documents of the past as

well, Appleton maintained that historic preservation should be committed to preserving the past as the past knew it, not as the present wished it to be.

Appleton was deeply impressed by the work of the SPAB, as were his Harvard mentors Charles Eliot Norton and Denman Ross. While that society had been founded by William Morris in 1877, its inspiration had come from Norton's soulmate, John Ruskin. According to one student of that great Victorian philosopher, Ruskin's "great architectural bequest is his insistence on preserving and revering the buildings of the past as an inspiration to the present. If the architecture of the present reflects a nation's values, so also does a nation's attitude toward its architectural heritage. Everywhere Ruskin looked in his own day, he saw beautiful monuments being razed, or worse yet, by his standard, 'restored to the white accuracies of novelty.'"⁴⁵

Ruskin's plea that buildings be preserved, rather than restored to a certain time period, became the main plank of the SPAB. Restoration "was a strange and most fatal idea," its principles read, "which by its very name implies that it is possible to strip from a building this, that, and the other part of its history--of its life that is, and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point and leave it still historical, living, and even as it once was." Restoration was a "forgery," therefore, which rested upon the "individual whim [of the restorer] to point out to them what is admirable and what contemptible: while the very nature of their task compels them to destroy something and to supply the gap by imagining what the earlier builders should or might have done."

⁴⁵Kristine O. Garrigan, Ruskin on Architecture: His Thought and Influence (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), pp. 159-160.

Condemning all restorations, the leaders of the English organization argued that the nation should protect "anything which can be looked on as artistic, picturesque, historical, antique, or substantial; any work, in short over which educated artistic people would think it worth while to argue at all."⁴⁶ According to the SPAB, therefore, historic buildings, whether in perfect or primitive condition, should be protected substantially as found; restorations, especially conjectural ones, were tantamount to forgeries and desecrations of artifacts.

Appleton received the advice of countless architects and antiquarians on the questions of preservation and restoration during this first decade. Ralph Adams Cram, an SPNEA trustee who was a noted architect of medievalist leanings, addressed the annual meeting of the Society in 1914 and spoke on restoration work in England and France. As Bolton recounted the address, Cram "said that substitution of facsimile work was cold & dead, [and] not to be tolerated so long as any fragments of the original work remained." Yet Cram also added a note in behalf of an artistic touch in restoration because "good taste is often more important than antiquarian fidelity." Murray Corse, a New York architect, similarly urged Appleton that a blend of "architectural skill and artistic appreciation" was necessary for a proper restoration. "So many restorations are spoiled by lack of these very qualities, restorations, that seem otherwise perfectly lettered," Corse explained. "After all, to revive the old feeling, the atmosphere of the old is the most important; and as the old was especially artistic it stands to reason that only an artist can do so. If we simply turn out a dry literal reconstruction (as the

⁴⁶"Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings," principles of 1877, repinted unaltered in 1906, typescript, SPAB file, SPNEA.

Germans do) the result is worse than useless, for people think: 'How ugly those old things were. Why spend money in preserving them?'"⁴⁷

Appleton, on the other hand, valued the opinion of Donald Millar and Henry Dean which held that an artistic approach or a conjectural restoration should be avoided. Rev. Donald Millar, an antiquarian author who rendered measured drawings of historic homes, considered conjectural restorations anathema. "To make over an old house to fit one's idea of what it should have been," he exclaimed, "is rank heresy and sacrilege!" Henry Dean, an architect whom Appleton chose for some of the Society's restoration work, likewise reiterated the impropriety of artistry in a restorer's work. He wrote Appleton:

As an imperative rule, all restoration of ancient New England houses must be impersonal, and aim in every case to preserve (and when necessary, reproduce) the manifold excellent characteristics they have ever possessed. The work must be impersonal for the sake of greater accuracy; for the great value of a relic is its testimony, and therefore it must ring true. The likes and dislikes of the 20th century should [not] influence the restorer, for his work is to declare, as definitely as possible, what old New England houses were like--not what this century would have them like.

Dean argued, moreover, that colonial structures should be restored to their appearances before the Revolution. Although Appleton would debate this point during the early years of the Society, Dean suggested that the restorer should "blot out every addition and alteration, and . . . present them in their original form."⁴⁸

While Appleton substantially agreed with Dean concerning the

⁴⁷Bolton, "Note-Book," March 12, 1914, Bolton Papers, MHS; Murray Corse to Appleton, May 15, 1919, Brown House Acq., H & B file, SPNEA.

⁴⁸Donald Millar to Appleton, January 21, 1915, Millar file, SPNEA; Henry C. Dean, "The Restoration of Old New England Houses," typed paper, n.d., [probably February 1917], Dean file, SPNEA.

impersonal nature of restoration work, he also gave the young architect a piece of his own advice about the importance of the construction of a historic building. Appleton in fact had been deeply impressed by the work of Norman M. Isham, the foremost antiquarian architect of New England, and his archaeological approach to a building's structure. Hoping to groom Dean to follow in Isham's footsteps, Appleton recommended that he pay more attention to the techniques used by the early craftsmen when they constructed the dwelling. Acknowledging this oversight, Dean wrote that

the elements & details of construction (especially those of a unique nature) have escaped my careful consideration--probably because my attention has been centered upon design rather than upon construction, & moreover because I have been led to look upon construction as a "means to an end" rather than "an end" in itself --the end being the dignified & elegant character which colonial work universally possesses to a seemingly unalterable degree. In the future I shall observe structural details with a particular interest now that you have shown me my negligence.⁴⁹

What was most important about restoration work for Appleton, therefore, was not the artistic imagination of the restorer when he restored the ambiance of antiquity, but the accuracy of the archaeologist as he unraveled the structural details of the building's construction.

The SPNEA gradually established its own philosophy of preservation and restoration during this first decade and the years soon after. While Appleton directed most of the Society's projects and supervised the restoration work of Dean, Chandler, and others, there still was much debate within the association. As late as 1918, Bolton wrote that there was a "hot meeting of the Preservation Society Trustees over restoration of bad

⁴⁹Henry C. Dean to Appleton, n.d. [possibly spring 1914], Dean file, SPNEA; see also Appleton to Dean, April 8, 1914, Dean file, SPNEA. Tragically, Dean died from pneumonia in the winter of 1919.

work vs. restoration in good taste which does not follow the original slavishly." The question in the debate, therefore, was the tension between an archaeologically accurate restoration and one of artistic conjecture. In the subsequent years Appleton tried to resolve the issue when he defined "the best principles of preservation work" as "the preservation of every scrap of the old that can possibly be preserved and the replacing of what has gone or must be removed with new work along the lines of the old, rather than something markedly different, or so nearly like the old that none but the practised eye can detect the errors it contains."⁵⁰

Although much of the restoration work of the SPNEA during the first decade often consisted of removing newer materials and work in order to uncover traces or fragments of the older structure, Appleton later voiced doubts about the practice. "It is something of a question in my mind," he wrote, "whether it is always wise to scrap second period work in order to go back to our idea of what first period work probably looked like."⁵¹ As an archaeologist Appleton generally resisted the temptation to undertake these conjectural restorations. In fact, what interested him most about the Brown house was its use as an artifact open to investigation. "In one detail the house has no superior," he explained, "namely, in what it can tell us about old 17th century windows." Careful archaeological

⁵⁰ Bolton, "Note-Book," May 9, 1918, Bolton Papers, MHS; Appleton to John Swarbrick, August 7, 1925, Ancient Monuments Society file, SPNEA.

⁵¹ Appleton to the President, Portsmouth Historical Society, September 14, 1929, Jackson House H & B file. Appleton wrote a letter on the same day and took a different stance which suggested that he was seeking some community feedback on the Jackson house restoration. He then favored "showing these rooms as they are modified by later generations instead of always scrapping this later work in order to show our idea of what the original was like"; see Appleton to James Sawyer, September 14, 1929, Jackson House H & B file, SPNEA.

scrutiny, he hoped, would provide some clues to the design of these windows because in that area, he admitted, the variety of evidence was often lacking and conjectural restorations were sometimes undertaken. The other aspects of the Society's work, Appleton wrote an English preservationist, usually presented "so much evidence that the British societies, so far as I have noticed the results, would speak of it as 'repairs' where we would speak of it as 'restoration.'" Acknowledging the SPAB's influence, Appleton even admitted: "I don't like to use the word 'restoration' for I believe that in Great Britain that has a sinister meaning not given it over here."⁵²

A sleight of the pen, however, could not diminish the differences between the SPAB and the SPNEA. The British society had strongly condemned the notion that restoration could "strip from a building this, that, and the other part of its history . . . and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point." While Appleton calculated the SPNEA's expenses, on the other hand, he admitted that "the Society might acquire a house in totally good condition, and yet have to spend twice its value over again in removing good modern work to uncover the old" and repair the rest. The public mood demanded the restoration, not the simple preservation of a structure, he claimed. "As a general rule it is quite difficult for us to raise money for the purchase and preservation of the old houses unless it is understood that the building is to be put back as nearly as possible into the condition it originally presented." At the same time he was highly critical, as were Ruskin and Norton, of the

⁵²Appleton to Arthur Lyman, January 3, 1919, Brown House file, SPNEA; Appleton to John Swarbrick, August 7, 1925, Ancient Monuments Society file, SPNEA.

extensive restorations undertaken by Viollet le Duc in France.⁵³

What Appleton actually attempted to do was strike a balance between the strident principles of the SPAB and the American demand for the restoration of colonial buildings to their early appearances. By 1924, for example, Appleton recommended that "it is not always advisable to go back to the original appearance of a building. Some of them show such an interesting lot of evidence of evolution of styles and periods as to justify the retention of these alterations." The varied fabric of the building, therefore, made "a human document of more interest" than a completely restored building which reflected a single era. Such sentiments brought him in sympathy with the ideas of the SPAB and substantiated his earlier claim that "there can be no doubt that the spirit of the work of the two societies is almost identical." Contemporary observers even claimed that Appleton's Society was the American counterpart of the SPAB.⁵⁴

Nothing could gainsay, however, the SPNEA's use of restoration, albeit very conservative, and the English society's rejection of it. Appleton hoped to bridge the difference through a reliance upon archaeological investigations and the avoidance of conjectural restorations. This was precisely the reason why he became enamored with both the Norton

⁵³"Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings," principles of 1877, reprinted unaltered in 1906, typescript, SPAB file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 8 (May 1916):12; Appleton to John Swarbrick, August 7, 1925, Ancient Monuments Society file, SPNEA.

⁵⁴Appleton to Mrs. Richard W. Meade, September 20, 1924, Meade file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings," Bulletin 5 (December 1914):18; Horace Sellers, "Protection of Historic Buildings," Journal of the A.I.A. 8 (February 1920):63; see also Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 255.

house and the Brown house. The latter was an important archaeological document "just because there is so little there that is worth saving. . . . It is a house practically in its original condition, unspoiled by later changes of the old work." While much of the old work was in an "extremely ruinous condition" and would have to be discarded, repairs--legitimate in the SPAB's philosophy--would be undertaken by a good carpenter in order that "the new work can be made exactly like the old so that the continuity of the structure is unimpaired." The other side of the coin--the lack of archaeological evidence--was the very reason he tried to avoid any connection with Isham's conjectural restoration of "the Old Stone House" in Guilford, Connecticut. Since the building had been "so badly man handled some years ago" and "all the evidence of the old work" had been destroyed, he felt that any restoration would generate hot controversy. "Altogether the whole thing is just the kind of proposition that I personally fight shy of, and prefer leaving it to somebody else to bother with."⁵⁵

Although Appleton favored conservative restorations, he had no objection to the installation of modern amenities in a historic house which would be used as a dwelling. "I see no reason why modern plumbing, gas, or electricity, etc., should not be introduced in an old house that is to be occupied," he wrote. "It is a matter of personal preference, and to a certain extent, of convenience. We have introduced all three

⁵⁵ Appleton to Heloise Meyer, January 17, 1917, Meyer file, SPNEA; see also, Norman M. Isham to Appleton, May 22, 1918, Brown House Acq. H & B file, SPNEA; for the "Old Stone House" see Appleton to George D. Seymour, November 2, 1914, Seymour file, SPNEA. Seymour, an SPNEA vice president, was in "flat disagreement" with Appleton's tacit endorsement of Isham's thankless task of restoration; see his letter to Emily H. Bush, October 20, 1914, Seymour file, SPNEA.

in our old Swett-Ilsley house." Some buildings, he felt however, should be preserved as primitive rather than outfitted for modern comforts. The sale of the Brown house, for example, evoked his fears that a would-be purchaser might redo "everything to the king's taste, putting all his modern stuff" into the section which was purely seventeenth century in origin.⁵⁶ If a structure was used as a period house or museum piece, moreover, the modern amenities should be placed in a caretaker's cottage, such as with the Scotch-Boardman house.

A major innovation in the field of American preservation established by Appleton was the use of a scientific regimen in the restoration process. The pattern set by earlier preservationists unfortunately had been one in which the architect's whims, a chaotic process, or a simple lack of knowledge had spoiled or devalued an artifact. During the SPNEA's first decade, on the other hand, Appleton gradually developed a disciplined methodology for the work of restoration. The steps in the process included an archaeological investigation of the building, the solicitation of advice from expert consultants, a thorough description through notes and photographs of each step in the undertaking, the marking of new replacement parts, a reliance upon skilled craftsmen, and a painstaking and analytical review of the on-going process. Appleton even went so far as to assemble an exhausting library of photographs of buildings from New England and the British Isles to provide research materials for his restorations. Never before had American preservation been subjected to such a method of work and study.

⁵⁶ Appleton to Murray P. Corse, April 10, 1918, Brown House file, SPNEA; Appleton to Norman M. Isham, March 26, 1918, Brown House file, SPNEA.

Appleton began his investigations sometimes by combing the countryside for neglected, yet historic, structures. Occasionally with books such as Isham's Early Connecticut Homes in hand, he inspected those buildings which had survived. Once he and Frederick Kelly thoroughly examined an abandoned building despite the presence of the house's tenants, a bevy of flea-infested cats. It was fortunate, a friend recounted, "that there were no visitors around to enjoy the full spectacle of two of New England's leading architectural historians in a neighboring pasture, stripped down as much as the law would allow, delousing themselves." These investigations and particularly Appleton's extensive notetaking and photography proved invaluable because "as he expected, many of these houses have now been destroyed or altered or restored, and his notes are often the only record of what we have of what once existed."⁵⁷ Photographing a building extensively from all angles--inside and outside, and before, during, and after restoration--was an axiom which Appleton regularly voiced. Much of the photography being undertaken, he complained, "has been generally done in a trifling manner, having no scientific, and but little antiquarian, training as its basis." Even some respected architects, such as Joseph Chandler, failed to "take photographs or make sketches, measurements or plans of such original work as he finds in the course of his restoration."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Unidentified memorial, possibly by Bertram K. Little, n.d., MS., Appleton file, SPNEA.

⁵⁸ Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," p. 178; Appleton to Donald Millar, January 5, 1917, Millar file, SPNEA; see also Appleton to Henry C. Dean, April 8, 1914, Dean file, SPNEA. Architects had been generally reluctant to make measured drawings and to photograph old buildings prior to this time. By the 1920s this changed when the Boston chapter of the American Institute of Architects agreed to help the SPNEA

Another important tenet in the methodology of preservation was in situ restoration. No matter how dilapidated the structure, Appleton urged preservationists first to stabilize the site "by the simple process of keeping the roof tight and the windows whole, not much of either [were] trouble or expense." The next step, he learned from Isham, must be on-site investigatory work. After Appleton purchased the deteriorated Brown house, he thought of dismantling it and then reconstructing it elsewhere. Fortunately he first asked Isham and Chandler for advice. Firing back a reply, Isham told him:

Keep the old building in situ. It has too many secrets to reveal. It has more to tell us than a little, not particularly about framing, which is really about all you preserve if you took it down and stored it, but about windows and stairs. All these little bits of extremely important detail will be lost unless you work slowly along with the house as it stands and ask your questions of it as you go and have the house to go back to if you don't understand the answer to some query and want to ask it over. Do not tear it down, it is too important. And don't work without some architect at your elbow. If you have Chandler get him to stay there as much as he can. DO NOT TEAR THE HOUSE DOWN!!

Chandler likewise urged Appleton to keep the Brown house on its present site: "I think a thing loses a great deal when it is pulled apart and then put up in a new place. It is connected with the history of the neighborhood and should remain where it is. . . . You may be sure that the cheaper plan of taking it down and putting it somewhere else is the less good one. It follows the inevitable rule, that a cheap thing is less good."⁵⁹ The lessons which Appleton learned, and then conveyed to

in the task. Somewhat humorously, Alice Longfellow, Appleton's own cousin and owner of the historic Cragie house in Cambridge, thought it was "indelicate" for a photographic study of architecture "to print the whole of one's private home for the public to see"; see Donald Millar to Appleton, February 19, 1916, Millar file, SPNEA.

⁵⁹ Appleton to Norman M. Isham, October 4, 1917, and Isham's reply of October 5, 1917; Joseph Chandler to Appleton, October 8, 1917, Brown

others, was that no matter how ruinous the building was it could be saved and that preservation should take place on its original site.

This preservation work, furthermore, should be conducted by trained artisans and supervised by experts. While "trusted and tried mechanics" should always be hired, Appleton warned Celeste Bush that "the men who will stand the most careful watching will be the carpenters, for carpenters have a most annoying way of ripping out the particular bits which carry the evidence of what old work was, and no carpenter ever seems to be able to realize what those bits are, so you will have to watch them all the time and take no chances." Even the discard piles must be gleaned for "every scrap of evidence," the preservationist wrote. "In cleaning out the [Brown] house, for instance, the piles of dirt were carefully hand picked and vital bits of evidence found in them." Ever the curious archaeologist, Appleton advised Bush: "Don't hesitate to err in the direction of keeping more than you think you want, for what you have you can always throw away but what you have not got you will not be able to get later on."⁶⁰ Since Appleton was so interested in archaeological accuracy he even devised a system whereby any new work which was introduced into a building could be readily distinguished from the old by a careful eye. For new work which was painted he urged using small upholstery tacks to make a piece; unpainted wood could be identified

House file, SPNEA. Isham and Chandler, together with William W. Cordingley and J. Frederick Kelley, were elected by the SPNEA trustees to the position of "consulting architect" in 1924.

⁶⁰[Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 10 (October 1919):6; Appleton to Celeste Bush, February 17, 1914, Thomas Lee House file, SPNEA; Appleton to Winthrop Coffin, May 13, 1919, Brown House Scrapbook, SPNEA; Appleton to Celeste Bush, April 21, 1914, Thomas Lee House file, SPNEA.

by a hammered stamp of inconspicuous dimensions.⁶¹

The SPNEA's philosophy of historic preservation proved unique. Historic structures which bore no touch of new work, such as the Brown house, were readily preserved in line with the principles of the SPAB. If a building contained evidence of remarkable old work and inferior modern touchings, however, Appleton did not hesitate to restore the structure to the earlier era. But with a dwelling which revealed an interesting and worthwhile fabric of both first- and second- or third-generation materials, the SPNEA leader would encourage, particularly by the 1920s, the preservation of the whole piece. The philosophy which governed this preservation process was intrinsically Appleton's own and it stemmed from a blend of his earlier training, the advice of expert colleagues, and even the empirical knowledge which he gained from the Society's early restorations. When he conducted either preservation or restoration work, however, he insisted on archaeological accuracy, antiquarian fidelity, and a scientific regimen. Since historic buildings were symbols of earlier peoples and their values, the influence which those forebears held in the present was inherently dependent upon the authenticity of the buildings as visible documents of the past.

A New Look at the Material Culture
of Old New England

While most of Appleton's attention during the first decade of the SPNEA concerned his campaign to preserve the buildings of the past, an

⁶¹See [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 9 (November 1918):34; Appleton to Mrs. Richard W. Meade, September 20, 1924, Meade file, SPNEA. Appleton also urged Wallace Nutting to do the same when he reproduced colonial furniture and fixtures; see Appleton to Nutting, November 24, 1917, Nutting file, SPNEA.

often overlooked area of his work was his attempt to create historical museums and parks which would enable New Englanders to learn from the past's material culture. In the case of these labors it probably is misleading simply to look at the results because neither his Skansen-like park nor the New England folk museum reached fruition. What he helped accomplish, however, was an awareness that New England's own handicrafts, arts, folklore, and heritage were as important as their counterparts in the Bavarian National Museum or the buildings and crafts at Skansen. The material culture of the past was not only part of a respected heritage, but a means to learn about earlier peoples as well. Since early twentieth-century professional historians were busy studying systems rather than things, antiquarians like Appleton and George F. Dow were left to fill the void. Appleton's protection of New England's material culture was a natural corollary of his Gospel of Preservation. The order and ethics of an earlier society were reified through the era's artifacts and buildings. This material culture, therefore, became another of the pedagogical tools which preservationists used to impress upon the present generations the worthiness of past traditions and values.

The buildings and artifacts of the past, Appleton believed, were as important as ideas in books. They illustrated a people's norms, styles of life, societal relationships, and the evolution from one era to another. Always concerned with "the actual substance of living" and the "creations of man," Appleton "strove to preserve [these] in the positions in which they were used, to illustrate man's industry, amusements, tastes, religious ideas, ambitions, and ideas, as shown in his works." A preserved building, such as the Norton house, became a document which offered tangible insights into an earlier time which could not be found in books. The Norton house

was "one of those houses almost unspoiled by the hand of time, that has come down to us in its crude, almost brutal, simplicity in a way that so few have done." It was "an archaeological document," Appleton claimed, which "shows with great faithfulness how some at least of our ancestors used to live, and I doubt very much if it will be at all easy to find anything of the kind elsewhere in the state."⁶²

Few documents like the Norton house had survived through the years and, like a rare book, it should have been at least cherished for the information which it imparted. Such material was desperately needed, wrote the editor of OTNE, because

it is a lamentable fact that the present generation possesses little accurate information on the every day life and surroundings of the early settlers in New England. . . . The newly settled country had no artists to paint pictures of household interiors in the manner of the Dutch painters and the diarists and letter writers of that time when they used a quill pen devoted little thought to the homely happenings of the household or to the costume and furniture with which every one was familiar.⁶³

Since so much of this written evidence was totally lacking, the preserved buildings and artifacts which formed an era's material culture, became principal clues for any investigation.

At the time a parallel phenomenon was a growing interest in American antiques and it stemmed in good part from the traditionalists' desire to make the preserved material artifacts of the Anglo-Saxon colonists the official culture of the land. Anglo-conformity hence included not only an adherence to the American language, but to both the styles

⁶²"William Sumner Appleton, 1874-1947," OTNE 38 (April 1948):80; Appleton to Hon. Rollin S. Woodruff, January 11, 1917, Norton House file, SPNEA.

⁶³"Notes and Gleanings," OTNE 12 (July 1921):45-46.

of design and the values reified in these antiques. When Wallace Nutting copied colonial furniture designs for his new productions, for example, he opined that these early American designs were "'the only tangible relics of our ancestors'" and we should "'carry on their spirit by imitating their work.'" Always one to worship these colonial forebears Nutting even claimed: "'Not to copy these approved types is a crime, because the only alternative is the making of mongrel shapes.'"⁶⁴

Antiques and their replicas essentially became symbols of one-hundred-percent Americanism and were "employed by museums as educational and propaganda tools." Like the simple colonial buildings, these antiques were admired for the values which they represented, such as simplicity, utility, and honesty. Among others George F. Dow, curator of the SPNEA's museum, believed that antiques were "appropriate vehicles for informing foreigners and less enlightened natives as to American traditions and values."⁶⁵ The material culture of the past, therefore, was prized not simply as a source for ideas, but as a tool to spur others to conform to traditionalism as well.

Since Appleton and the SPNEA believed that preserved buildings and artifacts were valuable documents, they looked askance at preservation

⁶⁴Nutting quoted in Elizabeth Stilling, The Antiquers: The Lives and Careers, the Deals, the Finds, the Collections of the Men and Women Who Were Responsible for the Changing Taste in American Antiques, 1850-1930 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. 190. Appleton admired Nutting's taste in furniture, but admitted little knowledge about his specialty: "You know how I have never pretended to know anything about furniture and am really grass green on the subject, but I will say this. If I ever found your caretaker away and had an automobile of my own at the house you would miss your furniture"; Appleton to Nutting, September 25, 1915, Nutting file, SPNEA.

⁶⁵Stilling, The Antiquers, pp. xiv, 124. Chapters are presented in this work on a number of SPNEA officers, including George Dudley Seymour, Henry W. Erving, and George F. Dow.

societies, such as the APVA, which spent a good deal of time and money simply marking sites with commemorative tablets. Even the reconstruction of long-lost historic structures, he claimed, was not a fit undertaking for a preservation organization. In an obvious reference to the preservationists of Virginia, Appleton wrote: "I should strongly advise against memorial tablets stating that this and the other had at one time stood here or been done there--much valuable effort and money is lost by societies concentrating on that sort of thing. By all means, concentrate on things which are actually remaining to be preserved and don't build over again on the old foundations a building that has disappeared." Typical of that sentiment, the trustees had earlier voted down a request "to help in the restoration of the monument commemorating John Smith's visit to the Isle of Shoales." Because "the object in view was more of commemoration than preservation . . . the Trustees felt that preservation work being always more urgent, should take precedence." When a benefactor proposed that the Society place bronze tablets in the Otis house to acknowledge those who made the restoration possible, Appleton thought that the idea "would be fatal" and give the rooms "the air of a mortuary chapel."⁶⁶

From its first days of operation the SPNEA proposed the formation of a regional museum in Boston which would be devoted to the material culture of New England. Rather than competing with other local museums, Appleton hoped to supplement their collections while illustrating the region's evolution and contribution to the nation. This museum, he

⁶⁶ Appleton to Mrs. C. A. Gosney, July 6, 1939, North Carolina Society for Preservation file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 5 (April 1914):11; Appleton to Mrs. William B. Clarke, May 7, 1917, Otis House Acq. H & B file, SPNEA.

predicted, would "be to New England what the Germanic Museum at Nuremberg and the Bavarian National Museum at Munich are to Bavaria." Since the trustees decided that a Boston museum should not be funded by the membership fees from afar, Appleton continually sought the help of a benefactor to create an endowment. After declining an invitation to help, Charles Francis Adams admitted that it was probably easier to get a \$500,000 donation from one person rather than \$1,000 from five hundred.⁶⁷ Much to his disappointment, Appleton never found that wealthy benefactor.

Lacking suitable quarters, the Society continued to accept donations of artifacts, but packed many of them away in barrels and cases. The accessions included everything from a dress coat worn by Daniel Webster to a china plate reportedly used by Washington and Lafayette. Appleton himself donated thousands of items to the museum and library. He even cajoled friends to do similarly. After viewing some Indian artifacts at a friend's house, he wrote: "I found myself waking up last night with a vivid dream of Indian relics." Since these particular ones were "much too good to be knocking around a suburban house," he thought that they would make a commendable contribution to his museum. He admitted candidly in a perfect burst of Appletonia: "I hate to buy anything"! While he once declared that the museum "collect[s] everything that is old," he nonetheless later considered it "wholly inappropriate" to exhibit "a piece of foreign workmanship" in the museum's collection.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ [Appleton], "The SPNEA," Bulletin 1 (March 1910):6-7; Bolton to Hon. Charles Francis Adams, May 26, 1914 and his reply, May 27, 1914, Appleton file, SPNEA.

⁶⁸ Appleton to Ida Farr Miller, March 3, 1919, Miller file, SPNEA; Appleton to Walter P. Eaton, January 21, 1919, Eaton file, SPNEA; Appleton to Gertrude M. Graves, April 4, 1917, Otis House Acq. H & B I file, SPNEA.

Appleton considered the museum a top priority but architectural preservation always took precedence in the SPNEA's budget. While the Society's finances were quite unstable he nonetheless planned secretly for the museum's expansion in the Otis house. "I have not dared mention these hopes of mine to our Board of Trustees for fear of ridicule," he wrote, "as the project is so absolutely beyond our present means." Appleton broadcast an appeal in the upcoming years for moneys to construct a fire-proof and secure building. Not only did he consider it a matter of regional pride that Boston have a New England museum, but thought that in these times of "wide-spread criminality" there was a pressing need as well to protect their collections. "What we have is nothing compared to what we are losing for lack of suitable protection," he told the membership. "We are constantly being told what we have received is the second best, the choicest things having gone elsewhere on account of our fire risk." When the trustees and Bolton rejected Appleton's museum expansion proposal in 1921, the corresponding secretary was "completely nonplussed" and, rather than spark an open disagreement with the president, only told him later that he was "absolutely wrong."⁶⁹

For all intents and purposes Appleton issued an ultimatum that he would resign rather than abandon the museum. Even when Bolton replied that the preservation of old houses should have been more vigorously pursued, the secretary fumed that "the old house line" was "being worked

⁶⁹ Appleton to Mrs. Edward P. Hodges, January 6, 1919, Otis House Acq. H & B I file, SPNEA; Appleton to Preston Pond, September 30, 1920, Pond file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 11 (April 1921):188; Appleton to Bolton, June 30, 1921, Bolton file, SPNEA.

for all the public can stand at the present time, certainly for all that one Society can do the public for. Moreover, any effort to separate the old house work from Museum work is bound to end disastrously." Unless plans were made for a museum expansion, he felt, "my time is, to a certain extent wasted in working for the Society" and "common decency required that the management of the Society should be put in the hands of those favoring your point of view." In fact, his frustration from the constant fund raising for the old houses was such, he admitted, that he "would be inclined to drop that altogether and give my time to a New England Museum pure and simple rather than continue the work of this Society." When Bolton received this letter in the midst of his English vacation, he probably was taken aback because an Appleton outburst, especially of these volcanic proportions, was a rare occurrence. His reply obviously tried to soothe Appleton's ire and he declared: "We are wholly in accord, and I am sure we shall continue to be, in all matters of consequence."⁷⁰ Although Appleton never resigned--actually he worked until his death in 1947--his ambitious plans for a prestigious New England museum never reached fruition.

A dozen years before the beginnings of Henry Ford's Greenfield Village or John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s reconstruction of Williamsburg, Appleton campaigned for the establishment of an outdoor museum on par with Sweden's folk park Skansen. Probably Appleton learned about similar folk parks during his European travels, but he definitely knew of the Essex Institute's small-scale effort which had originated from an 1899 suggestion by Francis H. Appleton to preserve "'relics out-of-doors.'"

⁷⁰ Appleton to Bolton, June 30, 1921, and his reply of July 20, 1921, Bolton file, SPNEA.

The corresponding secretary promoted the idea of creating "another 'Skansen Open Air Museum'" in 1914 when the Norton house seemed in peril. Thinking that the state of Connecticut could purchase it and relocate it near the state-owned "Old Stone House," Appleton felt that George D. Seymour, a trustee of the "Old Stone House," should carry the suggestion further. "If Connecticut ever could be induced to begin a Skansen in our good American way," he wrote, "every other state would feel that it had a particular duty to perform--namely, to go Connecticut one better, with a private Skansen of its own, and in that way much good material that is going to the scrap heap might be saved."⁷¹ In the upcoming years the preservationist would continually urge others to undertake such a task, but cautioned that, unlike Henry Ford's project, only homes which were doomed on their present sites should be moved to create a park.

The outdoor folk park which Appleton had in mind reflected his notion of the ideal community as symbolized through its material culture. In his Art and Archaeology essay, he expressed an admiration for Norway's park at Lillehammer whose aim was to assemble "'a collection of homes where one, as it were, can walk straight into the homes of the people who have lived there, learn to know their mode of living, their tastes, their work. For the home and its equipment are a picture of the people themselves, and in the old hereditary homesteads it is not only the single individual who is mirrored, but it is the whole race, generation after generation.'" One possibility for a New England version, he suggested, could be "a series of closely connected villages, each representing a

⁷¹Quoted in Hosmer, Presence of the Past, p. 213; Appleton to George D. Seymour, November 2, 1914, Seymour file, SPNEA; for another example of his proposal, see [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 13 (April 1923):188-189.

fifty year period in New England history." Wanting a park which illustrated the material progress made by a people whose homes were still clustered around a common, he proposed "a group of six tiny villages covering New England's history up to date, each village, with its meeting house situated on the village green or facing the village square and surrounded by the typical buildings of its period." This folk park would not only be a fitting portrait of the region's material culture, but also a medium for architectural preservation because its buildings would have been rescued from doomed sites. Appleton's interpretation of the past would have been the mainspring for these parks. Just as a historian collected ideas to present an interpretation in a book, so too would a preservationist assemble buildings and artifacts to portray his understanding of New England's history.⁷² In this case, the conservative and traditional values prized by Appleton and voiced in his gospel would have been bound to prevail.

Although Appleton campaigned eagerly to create a New England museum and outdoor folk part, he reacted with caution, and sometimes alarm, to another aspect of museum work, namely the period rooms sponsored by the major museums. "A recent tendency on the part of museums of art to make period rooms," he wrote in Art and Archaeology, "has unfortunately brought a new element of danger to our finest homes." While it was acceptable for a museum to strip the woodwork and decorative features from a house

⁷²Quoted in Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," p. 177; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," Bulletin 10 (October 1919):24. Various outdoor parks were created in the United States and each represented a theme and interpretation imparted by its designer or benefactor; see Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), Chapter 2.

before a building's demolition, "where museum trustees are open to criticism," Appleton opined, "is in their efforts, sometimes unfortunately successful, to take from buildings still standing intact, and capable of being preserved, the beautiful details which give their final touch of interest." Since many museum officials had few scruples about the practice, Appleton admitted to Donald Millar that he often kept secret a neglected architectural masterpiece "for fear the Brooklyn or New York museums would hear of it and want to tear it to pieces."⁷³

American antiques had become more popular than ever after the First World War and museums, as a result, scrambled to acquire entire rooms from old houses simply for the display of their antiques. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing, which opened in 1924, set the trend both for the display of antiques--though in a sanitized and romanticized fashion--and for the threats to historic buildings. The museum's director, Henry W. Kent, had earlier asked Appleton for help in finding dwellings which held rooms for possible museum use, but the preservationist refused and replied quite tactfully that buildings should be preserved in situ, not cannibalized for museums. What really brought the controversy to the flashpoint, however, was Wallace Nutting's sale of Portsmouth's magnificent Wentworth-Gardner house to the Metropolitan. Although Appleton had warned Nutting that it would be "an act of vandalism to take it apart for reerection as period rooms," the sale went through and led the corresponding secretary to urge Kent "to take the whole of it, even if only for re-erection under a glass roof in one of

⁷³Appleton, "Destruction and Preservation," pp. 170-171; Appleton to Millar, May 28, 1917, Millar file, SPNEA.

your large courtyards."⁷⁴

Fearful that he might alienate the friends and benefactors of the museum, however, Appleton soon acquiesced to the Metropolitan's move. While regretting the whole affair, he instead blamed Portsmouth residents and Nutting for allowing it to happen. "Hope you don't hold the Museum as much to blame as some people do," he wrote Millar. Appleton thought instead that the best move for the Society would be to promote a public awareness to prevent any such future occurrences.⁷⁵ Even when a wealthy American purchased the fifteenth-century English manor house, Agecroft Hall, in order to move it to Richmond, Virginia, Appleton claimed that the "real fundamental difficulty" was not the buyers or even the sellers, but the lack of laws protecting a nation's built heritage.⁷⁶

What Appleton proposed as a counter to the museum's period room was the increased use of in situ preserved houses for period displays. In

⁷⁴ Appleton to Nutting, August 9, 1918, Nutting file, SPNEA; Appleton to Henry W. Kent, July 16, 1919, Kent file, SPNEA.

⁷⁵ Appleton to Millar, March 20, 1919, Millar file, SPNEA. Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. has characterized this clash between Kent and Appleton as a "war" between the collectors and the antiquaries. This misrepresents Appleton's case because he was "far from disapproving unconditionally of the purchase of old houses for museum purposes." When the Boston Museum of Fine Arts purchased the early eighteenth-century Jaffrey house in Portsmouth for re-erection as a period house, for example, Appleton rejected the cries of vandalism. "If the people of a given locality are unable or unwilling themselves to protect its meritorious old work," he wrote, "then they must expect to lose it to outside buyers who so keenly appreciate it as to be willing to secure it for removal." Appleton to Israel Sack, October 1, 1919, Sack file, SPNEA; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 11 (July 1920):33; and Hosmer, "The Broadening View of the Historic Preservation Movement," in Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. by Ian M. G. Quimby (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), pp. 123-124.

⁷⁶ Appleton to John Swarbrick, February 6, 1926, and also his letters of January 6, February 24, and April 10, 1926, Ancient Monuments Society file, SPNEA.

the Society's first years Appleton had concentrated his efforts on preservation and thought that the SPNEA was "badly equipped to attempt" to run a period show house, such as the Shirley-Eustis mansion. But by the end of the decade he saw the use of a period house as a means to bridge the demands for architectural preservation and museum display. George F. Dow, who showed an accomplished hand with period rooms at the Essex Institute, was then hired as the SPNEA's museum curator. In time buildings such as the Fowler house, the Scotch-Boardman house, and the Arnold house would be used as period houses. Although most art collectors and architects had expressed utter disdain for the work of the mid-nineteenth century, Appleton suggested that an 1854 round house would be "an ideal period house for the display of mid-Victorian black walnut." But he admitted in frustration: "The present is probably fifty years too early for anything of the kind, since to most people that period represents the very quintessence of the ugly."⁷⁷ In his suggestion for a Victorian-era period house Appleton showed that his appreciation for an era's material culture was not necessarily limited to the halcyon days of the colonial and revolutionary periods.

Appleton's liking for this mid-Victorian edifice reflected one side of his diverse character and leadership. At least three styles of leadership were revealed by the corresponding secretary during the Society's early years. At times he was the pacemaker who set the trend for preservation and had eager supporters at his rearguard. Other times he acted as a visionary whose ideas and suggestions lacked both the wherewithal

⁷⁷[Appleton], "The Shirley-Eustis House Association," Bulletin 3 (February 1913):24; [Appleton], "Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary," OTNE 11 (April 1921):173-174.

and the enlistees to implement them. Most often, however, he was the practical and methodical leader who believed that study, hard work, and persistence could solve most of the problems and surmount most of the roadblocks which the Society faced. It was this blend of leadership styles that made Appleton such a dynamic figure.

When it came to establishing a disciplined regimen for the field-work of historic preservation, Appleton was a pacemaker whose lasting contributions changed the nature of restoration work. What he stressed was not only a deep respect for the material culture of an earlier era, but the need as well for an interdisciplinary study of that culture, and especially its built environment, which was based upon archaeology, architecture, and his own brand of antiquarianism. While his principles proved sound in his own work, many of his contemporaries lacked either the patience to implement his painstaking approach to restoration or the true antiquarian's realization that the material culture of the past must be protected from the whims of the present restorer. Since he insisted so much upon archaeological accuracy and scientific method, what he preserved or restored has all the more value for the modern historian.

At other times Appleton was a visionary whose proposals, if measured against the standard of actual results, bore little success. When he promoted a Skansen-like folk park, he won few supporters or funders. Within his own lifetime, however, Sturbridge Village, Mystic Seaport, Plimouth Plantation, and other historical parks would be established in New England. Even Appleton's proposals for an SPNEA museum in Boston which would contain American arts and crafts generally fell on deaf ears. Yet by the 1920s the metropolitan museums had co-opted his

idea--including the artistic donations, financial funding, and friends that he could have gained--by integrating American antiques and crafts into their collections. When Appleton made suggestions such as these, surely he must have been peering behind to see if anybody was following his leadership.

If the Society's future was at stake, however, Appleton more often than not was a practical leader and organization man. In the Progressive era and the corporate Twenties the maxims of a successful organization, whether it was a corporation or a preservation society, were a business-like operation, an efficient administration, dynamic leadership, sound financing, and a scientific methodology. While Appleton was never content with the Society's status, especially its finances, he labored to establish it on a sound footing during this first decade. In 1922 he reflected upon his past labors. "It is a long and slow pull," he admitted, ". . . and I am inclined to think that the present workers in the Society won't live to see more than the foundation laid for the Society's future prosperity. However, be that as it may, I hope that we shall at least succeed in laying the foundations so solidly that the Society's future will be worthy of the New England it commemorates."⁷⁸ This future success, he felt, depended upon the SPNEA's ability to promote a greater reverence for the traditions inherent in his Gospel of Preservation. Not only did his persistent efforts lay the foundations for the Society, but the remaining years of his life as well were spent in erecting an impressive superstructure built upon his ambitions and dreams.

⁷⁸ Appleton to George A. Plimpton, October 26, 1922, Plimpton file, SPNEA.

CHAPTER VI
THE REGENERATION OF TRADITIONALISM
THROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Although the founders and leaders of the APVA and the SPNEA implemented the Gospel of Preservation in different ways, they believed that the values and traditions which they had inherited from their forefathers could help remedy the rampant disorder which had been brought on by a flurry of change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What these preservationists most feared was that their respective regions would be shaped not by traditionalism but by an individual's quest for power and material comfort, by the pluralism that they associated with ostensibly inferior peoples, or by the class consciousness and radicalism of the industrial workers. Preservationists as a result turned to their past, not as an escape, but to protect the symbols which represented their conceptions of strong character, community service, responsible leadership, and moral righteousness. Historic preservation thus became a cultural movement which strove to regenerate earlier definitions of person, community, and state.

The preservation of the historic past--what was "historic" was a subjective statement by the preservationist--was designed both to rally traditionalists and their allies around the old standards and also to ensure that newer Americans conformed to this "older America." In the workplace, for example, traditionalists feared the growth of unions with

their collectivism and European-style class identity. In the view of preservationists and traditionalists, the old American work values, including an individual's persistent hard work and deference to an employer, were thereby endangered. Similarly, they claimed that the tradition of responsible leadership and enlightened citizenry was on the decline with the rise of mass democracy, immigrant or class-aligned machine governments, and a mobile, heterogeneous population. Praising an earlier era when government had been led by propertied, talented, and elite men of sterling character, preservationists depicted an ominous decline from George Washington and Harrison Gray Otis to William O. Mahone and James Michael Curley.

Intrinsic to the decline in the work ethic and the ideals of citizenship, preservationists claimed, was the deterioration of personal, familial, and community virtues. Like so many other reformers of their day, they believed that if the individual would recast his life according to trusted traditions and the community interest, his virtue would then spiral upward to benefit family, locality, and state. While condemning selfish individualism and privatism, preservationists also set their prized traditions as the standard for goodness and one-hundred-percent Americanism. Old nostrums, therefore, were applied to the factory workers, ghetto dwellers, immigrant clans, and emancipated blacks.

As preservationists preached the gospel they sanctified past heroes and values. While they did not create the American civil religion, they institutionalized it through state-chartered, private organizations. This civil religion was partly a reverence for state and nation, partly a sanctification of the customs and morals of early Americans, and partly an outgrowth of the Protestant sense of mission. Although the promotion

of the civil religion became an integral facet of historic preservation, there were marked differences between the APVA and the SPNEA. Because they interpreted and implemented the Gospel of Preservation differently, the APVA was much more the evangelist than was the SPNEA. Preservationists accordingly protected sites which became meccas or sacred shrines, paid homage to illustrious heroes who became sanctified saints, and created ceremonies which became the rites of the civil religion. Together with the values and traditions of the past this civil religion became part of the hegemonic culture which preservationists and traditionalists strove to reaffirm in a new and changed America.

The Cultural Crisis of the
Late Nineteenth Century

The attitude of Anglo-Saxon traditionalists during these years of the Victorian era was far from smug and complacent as the myth makers of the 1920s have suggested. On the contrary, their way of life was rocked by tremors from Darwinism, radicalism, industrial capitalism, and materialism. These years of the late nineteenth century, Paul Carter observed, were a spiritual crisis for New England's upper and upper-middle class Protestants of the British-derived denominations. Traditionalists in Virginia faced a similar predicament. Cynthia Coleman, a founder of the APVA, sensed the crisis as well. "In every heart the contest between good and evil is being waged perpetually," she wrote. "Passion, rage, envy, jealousy, greed for gold, rebellion against God. . . . Who can estimate the effect of these spiritual battles?" Her friend Edward V. Valentine, a member of the APVA Advisory Board, saw the same crisis in cultural terms. Just as Coleman lamented the loss of the old religion, he regretted the decline in the power of the old customs. "Among the

lovers of old Virginia," he said, "there are many who regret not only the disappearance of old interesting landmarks in the shape of houses, but sadder still, the disappearance of more important and revered landmarks, the good, respectable old Virginia customs."¹ Most historic preservationists, moreover, considered their inherited traditions to have been divinely ordained. The spiritual crisis, therefore, created a cultural crisis which prompted traditionalists to act and protect that past.

The spiritual crisis was aggravated by the widening economic rift and cultural clash between rich and poor which had been brought on by the effects of industrial capitalism. Traditionalists of upper and middle wealth, therefore, created their own alternative, a middle-class culture, which was a blend of inherited traditions and Victorian strictures. As Alan Trachtenberg explained, this culture was "a deliberate and conscious alternative to two extremes. . . . The extremes represented menace, peril to the original idea of a republic of freeholding independent property holders. . . . Culture and refinement, then, conveyed a political message, a vision of a harmonious body politic under the rule of reason, light, and sweet, cheerful emotion." As illustrated by the historic preservation movement, this middle-class culture was "founded on a newly fashioned creed of art and learning in the service of Protestant virtue." It became in essence "an official American version of reality." Yet this culture, Trachtenberg cautioned, was

¹Paul A. Carter, The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), pp. vii, ix; Cynthia B. T. Coleman, untitled essay on the prophecies of Isaiah, n.d., Coleman-Tucker Papers, Box 102, CWM; Edward V. Valentine, "My Recollections: Manners and Customs," December 14, 1923, draft MS., VM.

highly ethnocentric. Not only was it sealed off from the realities of immigration, urbanization, and other traumatic changes, it also "served the negative purpose of proclaiming what the true America was not, what it must exclude or eradicate in order to preserve itself."² Historic preservationists in Virginia and New England, therefore, preserved the "true" character of their region. What they preserved, as well as what they excluded, was a guide to the traditionalists' conception of what the past was like and the present should be.

Historic preservation became "a type of cultural crusade," Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., noted, which was waged by traditionalists to protect their conception of America. The question which they faced was: "Whose traditions, morals, and ancestry would prevail in the land turned modern?" As preservationists labored to regenerate their inherited values for individuals and community, culture became a "control mechanism" by which they tried to shape the present and future. "When seen as a set of symbolic devices for controlling behavior . . . ,"³ Clifford Geertz observed, "culture provides the link between what men are intrinsically capable of becoming and what they actually, one by one, in fact become. Becoming human is becoming individual, and we become individual under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically oriented systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives."³ The institutions which transmitted culture

²Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), pp. 143, 144.

³Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), p. 25; Clifford Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," in The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), pp. 45, 52.

were not simply the home and the school, but historical museums and preservation societies as well.

Historic preservationists voiced their gospel in light of the particular needs of local traditionalists. Essentially they spoke first to the propertied and leadership classes and warned of dangerous trends in society. Virginia traditionalists, for example, feared that their society--traditionally separated by race and differentiated by rank--was threatened by working-class activism and blacks' demands for greater freedom. Joseph Bryan, a member of the APVA Advisory Board and publisher of the Richmond Times, editorialized that the capitalistic sector must cultivate "closer relations with white workingmen" not only to maintain white solidarity, but to avert as well the "communistic feeling that in a greater or less degree is hid away in the breast of so many poor men."⁴ Like most businessmen of his era, fears of class-conscious populists and workers led him to restore an open society differentiated by rank but free of class conflicts.

Bryan and his co-worker in the APVA, Thomas Nelson Page, worried at the same time that the youngest generation of blacks were too assertive and must be "drawn into an intimate and subordinate relationship with the Caucasian." After a number of years working to "uplift" the Negro and make him responsible, Bryan turned pessimist and spiteful. "I

⁴[Joseph Bryan], "Closer Relations with White Workingmen," Richmond Daily Times, November 7, 1889. The census of 1890 starkly portrayed the causes of these communistic feelings. "Out of 12 million families, 11 million lived on incomes below \$1,200 a year. The average income of this group was \$380, far below the accepted poverty line. In the population as a whole, the richest one percent earned more than the total income of the poorest 50 percent, and commanded more wealth than the remaining 99 percent. About half of all American families lived without property"; see Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America, p. 99.

have undergone a sad change in feeling about Negroes--I cling to the memories of bygone days--but I loathe the realities of today," he wrote his cousin Parke Bagby in 1906. "It is nearly all memory with me. . . . When they come to be judged by the White Standard it goes very hard with them." Samuel C. Mitchell, a history professor and APVA advisor, believed, moreover, that the great mass of blacks were "in a low state of moral development" and were "swayed by superstitious feelings more than by a pungent sense of right."⁵ These fears of black freedom led preservationists to a more strident preaching of the gospel. What Virginia's past traditions and history revealed, they claimed, was the need for white leaders to exercise both a Christian paternalism and thorough discipline on the blacks. The implicit message embodied in the preserved culture of Old Virginia, therefore, was that the safety and security of white society demanded the simultaneous uplift and control of the black population.

Preservationists in the Boston-based SPNEA likewise used the past to counter ominous developments in the present. Joining with other progressives, they acted to conserve their respected traditions and, Arthur Mann observed, "to preserve the older ideas of American life wrapped up in the one idea of the open society. Fearful that America would follow Europe in developing a class-ridden society, they cherished the ancient doctrine of the oneness of the human race." That oneness had been dramatically challenged as Boston became a city sharply divided by class

⁵ Laurence J. Friedman, The White Savage: Racial Fantasies in the Postbellum South (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, A Spectrum Book, 1970), p. 73; Joseph Bryan to Parke Bagby, August 27, 1906, Bagby Family Papers 60, VHS; Samuel C. Mitchell, "Five Factors in the Negro Problem," reprinted from The Hartford Seminary Record (November 1904), Mitchell Papers Box 15, LC.

and ethnicity. While the middle and upper classes retreated to safe havens or streetcar suburbs, the central city and immigrant neighborhoods became, they believed, alien and uncontrolled districts where crime and vice reigned.⁶ The immigrant masses and their cultures created both shock and dread in the traditionalists. Preservationists therefore worked to rally the Anglo-Saxon leadership classes around their inherited traditions. They used history as an active tool and, like governing classes before them, J. H. Plumb explained, they "required the past to inculcate virtue, to help to create the ideas and attitudes which the state might need and above all to provide human models of virtue."⁷

When preservationists protected and popularized their traditions, what emerged was a rejection of cultural pluralism and an advocacy of their own brand of one-hundred-percent Americanism. Wallace Nutting, a friend of and sometime advisor to the SPNEA, regretted the plurality of cultural forms which existed in New England and called instead for a return to an indigenous and pure style. Lamenting the cosmopolitan designs of the Gilded Age, he wrote: "We are learning that we have done

⁶ Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age: Social Reform in Boston, 1880-1900 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1954), p. 238; for the divisions in Boston, see Sam B. Warner, Jr., Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 162, and James R. Green and Hugh Carter Donahue, Boston's Workers: A Labor History (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1979), p. 57.

⁷ J. H. Plumb, The Death of the Past (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, Sentry Edition, 1970), p. 49. Traditionalists often painted dark pictures of the "immigrant masses," but as Raymond Williams explained, "there are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses." This biased means of grouping individuals "has been capitalized for the purposes of political or cultural exploitation. What we see, neutrally, is other people, many others, people unknown to us. In practice, we mass them, and interpret them, according to some convenient formula"; see his Culture and Society, 1780-1950 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1958), p. 300.

many unnecessary things; that we have dragged in material from afar which was not so good as that which lay around us." Like Nutting, William Sumner Appleton believed that a building's design intimately revealed a people's character. He thus appreciated the seventeenth-century designs and work precisely because they were "the more strictly New England type, or . . . Anglo-Saxon type" which were connected with "our ancestral lines" and had "the flavor of the soil." His contention that New England should remain Anglo-Saxon in character and inspiration was common to all traditionalists. As one writer phrased it, "We came with the English language, with our religion fixed, with our dress, with our ideas of social life, with our ideas of domestic life, with our framework of law, with our industries. We have all these now, and we mean to keep them. Not only that, but we mean that everybody who has come here since we came shall also adopt them."⁸ Unlike some reformers who recognized the important contributions of immigrant culture, therefore, traditionalists such as those in the SPNEA called for a protection and popularization of Anglo-Saxon culture. The cosmopolitan present, in essence, would be supplanted by conformity to the Anglo-Saxon past.

Preservationists in both Virginia and New England, as a result, perceived significant challenges to the place of tradition in their respective societies. Although they stated a belief in a classless society, they nonetheless idealized an earlier community which had been differentiated by rank and family background. They accordingly reacted strongly

⁸Wallace Nutting, Massachusetts Beautiful (Framingham: Old America Company, 1923), p. 282; Appleton to Murray Corse, March 16, 1918, Brown House file, SPNEA; George French, ed., New England, What It Is and What It Is to Be (Boston: Chamber of Commerce, 1911), p. 41.

to the increased power of Readjusters, Populists, workers, immigrants, and blacks. In the past, the people who comprised these groups had been subordinate and had recognized the leadership and influence of community figures like Harrison Gray Otis and Thomas Nelson. In the modern world of unions, factories, and cities, however, traditionalists faced phenomena for which McGuffey readers, genteel society, and mythic history had little prepared them. With Anglo-Saxon, traditionalist culture challenged, albeit still paramount, preservationists therefore won state recognition for their work, protected the symbols of the past order, and used history as a tool to impress the familiar past upon the alien present.

Traditional-Style Models for
New Workers and Citizens

Preservationists in the APVA and the SPNEA frequently declared that work was an index of moral virtue, a test of character, and the key to success. Perhaps the governing precept of this work ethic and one used both to defuse working-class solidarity and to deter challenges to the economic system during the depression-wracked 1890s and after was the myth of the self-made man. According to its "cult of success," explained Irwin G. Wyllie, the myth posited that "those who willed salvation and diligently cultivated industry, frugality, sobriety, perseverance, punctuality, loyalty, obedience, initiative, and a host of kindred virtues would find reward in success." The most common idiom for the cult was the ladder of opportunity. It was "a perfect symbol of the bourgeois idea of society," Raymond Williams suggested, "because, while undoubtedly it offers the opportunity to climb, it is a device which can only be used individually: You go up the ladder alone. This kind of individual climbing is of course

the bourgeois model: a man should be allowed to better himself." What was important about the principle of the ladder, he maintained, was that it undercut the idea of common betterment for all in society, it entrenched the position of hierarchy, and it deterred working-class solidarity. This cult of success, Wyllie added, also placed the question of success or failure totally upon the individual, not on the economic or social system. "One of the fatal weaknesses of the self-help argument," he claimed, "was that it explained everything in terms of inner qualities and nothing in terms of the environment."⁹

The gospel of work was enthusiastically endorsed by Virginia preservationists and they thereby reversed an earlier aristocratic practice that hard work had been undertaken simply by servants. After the Civil War many sons of the best families had left the Old Dominion because no work other than manual labor was available. Traditionalists like Joseph Bryan and J. L. M. Curry subsequently instilled the work ethic not only in the working classes, but in the capitalistic classes as well. Bryan's Richmond Times editorialized, for example, that manual training built discipline and a reverence for order in youth. In an age of union strikes, his paper advised: "When a boy has been taught in the manual training school the dignity and value of labor he will be disposed to build up rather than to pull down and destroy property." These attitudes permeated the APVA's rendering of Virginia history. Thomas Nelson Page's praise for Sir Thomas Dale, a seventeenth-century governor at Jamestown, rang like a paean to the work ethic and free enterprise. The governor

⁹ Irwin G. Wyllie, Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches (New York: The Free Press, 1954), p. 54; Williams, Culture and Society, p. 331; Wyllie, Self-Made Man in America, p. 141.

deserved the emulation of the moderns, Page claimed, for he "had reclaimed almost miraculously those idle and disordered people, and reduced them to labour and an honest fashion of life." Not only did he enforce the work ethic, the orator added, Dale also "abolished communism, under which the colony had languished, and gave men their holdings in severalty."¹⁰

As the arts and crafts movement attracted many New England preservationists, more attention was focused upon the medieval artisan, his close connection with the community, and the high level of quality in his craftsmanship. Implicit in this movement's philosophy was a criticism of the modern industrial worker, his special-interest union, and the mass-produced goods of the factory. When Appleton mentioned unions in his correspondence, for example, he criticized them and their strikes as contrary to the public interest. All the while he gave high praise to the workers of an earlier era and especially held a "supreme and fascinating interest attaching to the survival of truly mediaeval mannerisms" in New England's built environment.¹¹ Most likely he had been strongly influenced by his Harvard mentors, particularly Charles Eliot Norton.

¹⁰For the postwar setting see Virginius Dabney, Virginia: The New Dominion (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1971), p. 419 and C. Vann Woodward, "The Southern Ethic in a Puritan World," in American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), pp. 42-43; "Nature Study," The Richmond Times, November 9, 1902; Thomas Nelson Page, Address at the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement at Jamestown, [1907] (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1919), p. 17. Traditionalists commonly claimed that unions were detrimental to the community interest. If they accepted the principle of unionization, as did Bryan and Curry, then they condemned the use of the strike and the union shop.

¹¹Appleton, "Harry Dean's Work in Connection with the SPNEA," MS., n.d., Dean file, SPNEA.

Like many traditionalists of that era, proponents of the arts and crafts movement believed that high quality designs and products should be crafted by the worker, regardless of the environment in which they were made. Hence they looked at the product, not the factory which produced it.

The Boston Society of Arts and Crafts (BSAC), for which Norton had served as first president in 1897, worked in tandem with the SPNEA to study and promote the values of the medieval craftsman. Stressing the qualities of utility, simplicity, and honesty in design and work, the society ostensibly strove to improve the quality of modern labor and goods. It failed, however, to understand the totally different context of work in the factories and industries of contemporary New England. Evoking the medieval era when an individual worker had some control over his labors and environment, the society, according to its principles, "'endeavor[ed] to stimulate in workmen an appreciation of the dignity and value of good design; to counteract the popular impatience of Law and Form, and the desire for over-ornamentation and specious originality. It will insist upon the necessity of sobriety and restraint, of ordered arrangement, of due regard for the relation between the form of an object and its use, and of harmony and fitness in the decoration put upon it.'" ¹² Ralph Adams Cram, a leader of both the SPNEA and the BSAC, addressed the annual meeting of the preservation society in 1914 and, according to Charles K. Bolton's recollection, "plead for hand work in

¹² Allen H. Eaton, The Handicrafts of New England (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949), p. 283. Other organizers of the society included Ralph A. Cram, SPNEA trustee and prominent architect; Denman Ross, Appleton's architecture teacher in graduate school; and Charles A. Cummings, president of the Boston Architectural Club and spouse of an SPNEA trustee.

old buildings 'for its own sake & to help men who are taking up crafts-
manship on account of the crushing & leveling influence of trades-
unionism.'" ¹³

Wallace Nutting enthusiastically supported both the preservation and arts and crafts movements because they were concerned, he claimed, with the protection of the pure beauty and designs of the preindustrial era. Not only did he believe that "the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were distinguished for better tastes than ours," but that a later machine-made craft "entirely lacks individuality, the touch of the hand and the feeling of the artificer. There never was a piece of it worth saving," he opined, "and the time will never come when it will be of value. It is inherently bad." Nutting, and the arts and crafts movement in general, thought that the inherited material culture should be used as a pedagogical tool to uplift the modern citizenry. Aesthetics again was most important in his considerations and melded with his rural ethic and support for preservation. "Somehow we must get before our people images of beauty," he wrote in his highly popular Massachusetts Beautiful. "They must become accustomed to seeing fair outlines, because education is mostly a matter of the eye, with the average man. If we can establish regions, where no unsightliness reigns for a mile, could anything promise better for our future? The mind of a man cannot be normal, he claimed, "unless it can feed on something worth looking at." ¹⁴

¹³ Charles K. Bolton, "Note-Book," March 12, 1914, Bolton Papers, MHS.

¹⁴ Wallace Nutting to Appleton, July 7, 1919, Nutting file, SPNEA; Nutting, Massachusetts Beautiful, pp. 278-281. Nutting was much more the purist than Appleton; the latter even recommended in the 1920s using a mid-nineteenth century house as a period display for Victorian "black walnut" designs, a style which Nutting considered to be the epitome of bad taste.

Notwithstanding the merits of colonial craftsmanship or hand-made goods, the arts and crafts movement, including many in the historic preservation cause, totally failed to come to grips with the plight of the worker in modern industry. The work ethic and aesthetics which arts and crafts proponents advocated had little meaning for industrial workers who were more extensions of their machines than real craftsmen. Instead of providing solutions for or some amelioration of their environment, what they offered instead were copybook maxims about personal character and hard work. Even when machine-made goods were considered, these traditionalists failed to note their importance in democratizing material consumption. Rather than helping the needs of the laborer, the arts and crafts ideology actually met the needs of the modern bourgeoisie. As Jackson Lears noted, it became "a means of personal revitalization" and "another form of therapy for an overcivilized bourgeoisie."¹⁵ Their glorification of the preindustrial work order had little relevance for industrial workers. Yet the values and virtues of the Protestant work ethic remained the standard by which modern labor was judged.

The Gospel of Preservation, as voiced by the leaders of the APVA and the SPNEA, stemmed from a belief that the political system had declined as well during recent years. When preservationists preserved the homes and praised the characters of men like Patrick Henry and Harrison Gray Otis, they often directly contrasted these past politicians with those of the present. What the preservationists failed to acknowledge,

¹⁵For the democratization of consumption see Arthur J. Pulos, American Design Ethic: A History of Industrial Design to 1940 (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1983); T. J. Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. 65.

however, was that the political battles of late nineteenth-century Virginia and early twentieth-century Massachusetts were as much economic and cultural struggles as they were questions of political principle.

Whether traditionalists attacked the Readjuster's interracial coalition headed by William O. Mahone or the Democratic immigrant machine of James Michael Curley, they condemned the political morality of their opponents and claimed that they represented a class, not a public, interest. The clash between traditionalists and insurgents actually represented a conflict between the proponents of an organic community and a mass democratic society. As Raymond Williams noted, many traditional leaders believed that society was an organic community where unions, political machines, and special-interest groups were contrary to the public interest. With the rise of democratic politics, however, traditionalists feared not only that old-time notions of elite rule and deferential politics were endangered, but that mass democracy would also swamp their own cultural influence and predominance.¹⁶

Mass democracy, therefore, was judged by traditionalists upon their perceptions of the past's organic community. Yet those perceptions, which had been shaped partly by the preserved material culture, were often flawed by myth, wishful thinking, and tendentious interpretations. Traditionalists and preservationists nonetheless believed that an organic community must be reestablished according to the precepts of traditionalism. Although they sincerely worked to instill their standards of good citizenship

¹⁶Williams, Culture and Society, p. 296; see also Robert G. McCloskey for the era's redefinition of the word "freedom" according to the needs of laissez-faire capitalism in his American Conservatism in the Age of Enterprise, 1865-1910 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1951), pp. 2-9.

into the modern populace, their program of education and uplift, including the preaching of the Gospel of Preservation, was class- and culture-bound and implicitly designed to counter contemporary democratic challenges to traditionalism. When the populace approved of parties or policies which defied the traditions of Virginia or New England, preservationists argued that the citizenry must be reformed, reeducated, and lifted from its ignorance. Traditionalists defined their interests as those of the community and accordingly used the lessons of history, as symbolized in the preserved material culture, to abate the challenges to traditionalism which had been brought on by mass democracy.

Preservationists in Virginia called for a return to the old style of leadership and a "responsible" electorate. The insurgent political machine associated with General William O. Mahone became the target of traditionalists' tirades in the 1880s and inspired conservatives for many years to come. The "background and character [of] the General was the complete antithesis of everything held sacred in the Old Virginia Mystique," Raymond Pulley explained. "He was neither to the manner [sic] born, nor did he ever bother to acquire the genteel social graces customarily required for success in the traditionalist society of the state." According to preservationists like Bryan and Curry, Mahone moreover had defied Virginia tradition by directly appealing to the people--both black and white--and by readjusting the state debt, thereby casting a shadow upon the Old Dominion's financial honor.¹⁷

¹⁷ Raymond H. Pulley, Old Virginia Restored: An Interpretation of the Progressive Impulse, 1870-1930 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968), p. 39. Mahone had been born as well to a tavernkeeper--a fact which caused dismay in some preservationists who also advocated temperance. One of those preservationists was William Wirt Henry. Somewhat ironically in his hagiography of his grandfather he never mentioned that he had once been a tavernkeeper as well.

Traditionalists feared that unrestrained democracy, such as Mahone's in their estimation, threatened the sanctity of law which had been long established by Virginia conservatives. Working to uplift the citizenry and thereby control this threat, J. L. M. Curry told one assembly: "The most effective way to make popular government a beneficent fact and influence is to lift the masses, all the citizenship, to higher moral and intellectual attitudes. It is character, not institutions, which makes good citizenship. A government whose citizens are ignorant, base, venal or corrupt, is not far away from anarchy or despotism." Samuel C. Mitchell, educator and APVA advisor, agreed and went one step further by essentially defining democracy in Rousseauistic terms. Democracy became obedience to laws which had been enacted by legislators who may have represented only a fraction of the populace. If democracy is to work, he also claimed, it "necessitates self-control. It means reverence for law. We are governed not by law, but by respect for law." Some preservationists, such as Thomas Nelson Page, discounted these attempts to instill discipline and respect for law through education. That scion of old Virginia urged that voting qualifications be raised to "leave the ballot only to those who have intelligence enough to use it as an instrument to secure good government rather than to destroy it."¹⁸ This "good government" was essentially the goal of Virginia's new Constitution of 1902, which disfranchised much of the lower class. While differences existed among Virginia preservationists over the issue of popular voting,

¹⁸J. L. M. Curry, "Recent Tendencies in Free Political Institutions," Address of January 15, 1901 to the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, Curry Papers I-13, LC; Samuel C. Mitchell, "The Ethics of Democracy," Mitchell Papers Box 9, LC; Thomas N. Page, "A Southerner on the Negro Question," North American Review 154 (1892):412.

they nevertheless agreed that law and constitutionalism were the most secure and sacred defenses against radical challenges, whether those came from blacks demanding real freedom or from populists calling for true democracy.

Traditionalists in New England also faced a challenge from mass democracy which led preservationists to lament the present state of politics. Charles K. Bolton, SPNEA president, claimed that "democracy [had] run mad" when the citizens chose a "ridiculous" character like Mayor Curley for office. At the same time Appleton backed a good government plan to develop a proportional representation voting scheme in Boston which would enable the political minority (the traditionalists) to gain enough influence to thwart some of the dealings of this Democratic immigrant machine. Wallace Nutting, on the other hand, stressed the citizen's responsibility not to a special interest group, but to the community at large. "A good citizen will naturally ask himself whether he can be serviceable in making the future of Massachusetts, not safe for democracy, but safe for developing humanity. We were at the polls the other day," he recounted, "and certainly we felt no pride in democracy. It is, indeed, the best form of government if intelligence accompanies it; otherwise is it not the very worst form of government?"¹⁹ These preservationists were loyal to conservatism and its conception of the community; they obviously felt that the system of democracy was corrupted by politicians who catered to the masses and violated trusted traditions. As the SPNEA preserved the homes of men like Harrison Gray

¹⁹Charles K. Bolton, "Note-Book," February 23, 1914, Bolton Papers, MHS; for Appleton's advocacy of the Hare Plan see his letter to Harrison Gray Otis, April 14, 1924, Otis House file, SPNEA; Nutting, Massachusetts Beautiful, pp. 277-278.

Otis, John Cooper, and Samuel Fowler, preservationists took extra steps to praise their forebears' political responsibility and disinterest in serving the commonwealth.

Throughout these efforts, preservationists in both Virginia and New England strove to restore the ideals of old-time politics. Although their conception of the past was shaped in part by romantic myth and filial piety, they pictured a past where the leaders, a select minority of the population, had the courage to stand by principle, the foresight to direct policy in the community's interest, and a pride in their own personal integrity and character. The citizenry of this past, preservationists claimed, had acknowledged the wisdom of their leaders and deferred to their authority, yet had taken an interest in the community's betterment. Whether this past had been set in the environs of Williamsburg or Boston, preservationists believed that the present was in sharp contrast and in evident decline. Despite the idealistic wishes of these preservationists, the nature of modern politics had dramatically changed as their regions industrialized, urbanized, and became heterogeneous. The old nostrums were just not enough to counter the change and reorder the present.

Modern Heroes and Traditional Models

Since historic preservationists in the APVA and the SPNEA returned again and again to describing the character of the individual as the cornerstone of the community, they endeavored to popularize the traditionalist model in their contemporary eras. This traditional hero, according to Theodore Greene, was the neo-classical ideal or hero of the young republic. He was "a patriot, a gentlemen, and often a scholar"

whose concern for the betterment of the community created "a public philosophy, not a private one." The features of his character, explained Warren Susman, were usually described with words such as "citizenship, duty, democracy, work, building, golden deeds, outdoor life, conquest, honor, reputation, morals, manners, integrity, and above all, manhood." The stress was clearly moral and the interest was almost always on some sort of higher moral law."²⁰

By the 1890s and the first years of the twentieth century, however, the image of society's hero had dramatically changed. The popular culture glorified the dynamic, forceful leader and the "cult of Napoleon" had set in. The personal features that made Napoleon "the single most common stereotype" of popular heroes in the 1890s, Greene explained, were "his embodiment of supreme individual fame and his self-made rise from obscurity." Whereas the neo-classic hero had built his fame upon traits such as honesty, piety, and community interest, the character of the newer hero "called for strength of will, forcefulness, and what the period termed 'animal magnetism.'" In an era when the Darwinian struggle was a popular theme, therefore, the neo-classic ideals received a "relatively insignificant place" in the list of a hero's attributes. Typically this Napoleonic hero ran over his friends and the general public in his pursuit of power. During the ensuing Progressive era, Greene continued, the popular hero continued to be cast in "a strongly individualistic frame of forcefulness, independence, and dominance." What was different,

²⁰Theodore Greene, America's Heroes: The Changing Models of Success in American Magazines (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 11, 56; Warren I. Susman, "'Personality' and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture," in New Directions in American Intellectual History, ed. by John Higham and Paul K. Conkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 214.

however, was that more attention was given to traditional character features, such as the contribution which the hero made to society, the requirement that social virtues and republican tactics be used on the road to success, the close relationship between a hero and the populace, and the notion of primary service to the community before self.²¹

Virginia preservationists set as their ideal the neo-classic hero and typified him as having a virtuous character, an idealistic tenor, a pure family life, and a commitment to the dignity and grace of Old Virginia. Some traits of their characterization were actually features of the modern middle-class culture, including a Puritan-like work ethic and a frugality in life style. Among others in the Association Joseph Bryan glorified the early republic when "the best men" were noted for "their simplicity, their piety, their personal courage, and their strong common sense." Self-reliance was a virtue which Bryan admired as well. He admitted to his cousin Cynthia Coleman: "'I only help people to help themselves'" to which she replied that that was "surely the highest wisdom." Mary Stanard, the historian of the APVA, also praised John Marshall for his simplicity and personal virtue. As she lectured the Association, Stanard pictured Marshall as the "eldest of fifteen children" who was "reared in frugality on a frontier farm" and accordingly lacked "any taste for the ornate in dress, manners or speech."²²

For female preservationists such as Sara Pryor, Mary Washington was

²¹Greene, America's Heroes, pp. 112, 119, 120, 138, 148, 279-280.

²²Joseph Bryan to Judge William McLaughlin, December 16, 1890, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Cynthia B. T. Coleman to her son, George P. Coleman, February 6, 1890, Coleman-Tucker Papers Box 58, CWM; Mary N. Stanard, John Marshall and His Home (Richmond: Wm. Ellis Jones' Sons, 1913), p. 19.

a heroine for her character and her attention to her noble son. In a modern age which encouraged material consumption and personal display, Pryor wrote: "Surely it is not for American women of this day--sheltered, treasured, adored--to complain that industry, simplicity in living, ungraceful dress and manner, mar the portrait of a noble women whose lot was cast in a narrow and thorny path, whose life was necessarily a denied one, and yet who accomplished more for her country than any other woman ever did or ever can do." The mother of Washington, moreover, "was self-denying, diligent, and frugal," as well as conscientious toward her religious obligations. Sara Pryor obviously considered Mary Washington's "example of self-denial" and her concentration on the familial role to be a shining model to counter both the selfish materialism of her own day and those women who campaigned for equal rights.²³

Domestic qualities, such as Mary Washington's devotion to her son, won high praise from these preservationists and from southern society as well in the late nineteenth century. "In the decades after the Civil War the family was the core of Southern society; within its bounds everything worthwhile took place." Included in this cult of domesticity, explained Allen Guttman, was an "apotheosis of woman" which, rather than being a tradition from colonial days, "was a phenomenon of middle-class culture, an aspect of Victorianism."²⁴ Accordingly, women were charged not only with the preservation of morality, but with the protection of home and

²³Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, The Mother of Washington and Her Times (New York: Macmillan Company, 1903), pp. 181-182. Sara Pryor's life in New York City, however, was hardly that of republican simplicity.

²⁴Francis B. Simkins and Charles Pierce Roland, A History of the South, 4th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 379; Allen Guttman, The Conservative Tradition in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 33.

family values as well. Many in the Association, such as John Lesslie Hall, considered Jamestown a "most sacred spot" for Virginia and Anglo-Saxon families because "here the first English home was planted." Since the home and family were defined according to middle-class values some preservationists considered it contrary to true Americanism for a woman or small child, as in working-class or immigrant families, to work outside of the home. Similarly circumspect and immoral was the practice of divorce. General John E. Roller addressed the Association in 1899 and praised the Germans of colonial Virginia "for their domestic virtues" and for "the marriage union being always regarded with sacred reverence." His friend Joseph Bryan conjectured, moreover, that the founders of the Republic would have been shocked by the "liberal divorce" rate among the wealthy barons of the Northeast.²⁵

Besides a strong familial bond, other personal qualities were highlighted by these preservationists. John Marshall's speech, claimed Mary Stanard, was a lesson for the bombastic orators of her own day. His debates, she claimed, "were colored with no flowers of rhetoric, but were spoken straight to the judgment, for the single purpose of convincing." John Smith, on the other hand, was best known for his "soldierly qualities" in a modern era when many conjectured that Americans had lost their martial vigor. But Smith was no ambitious Napoleon, Sara Pryor explained, because he was compassionate, "pitiful to the sick and weak, tender to children, [and] watchful of the comfort and rights of the unfortunate." Sobriety

²⁵ John Lesslie Hall, Introductory Address Delivered . . . at the Jamestown Celebration, Held May 13th, 1895 (Richmond, n.d.), p. 7, Hall Papers, CWM; "A Fine Address by General Roller," The Richmond Times, January 10, 1899; [Joseph Bryan], "Tendencies Unforeseen by the Founders of the Republic," The Richmond Daily Times, November 23, 1889.

and common sense were admired as well by Cynthia Coleman in the figure of George Wythe. After throwing off "the dissolute trammels of youth" he became "one of the most brilliant intellects and grandest characters of his age and time. . . . Examples of such wonderful determination and self-control are not numerous," she admitted, "and are therefore, entitled to reverence and respect." In the turbulent 1890s John Roller told the Association that a highly praised trait of the colonial Germans had been their "submission to law and order."²⁶ These personal characteristics obviously held portentous meaning for conservative leaders as they disciplined the citizenry during years of challenge.

Many preservationists were concerned that respect for community had deteriorated in an age of materialism and personal ambition. Like southern progressives, Dewey Grantham explained, they "shared a yearning for a more orderly and cohesive community" and one "that would accommodate a society differentiated by race and class but one that also possessed unity, cohesion, and stability." The type of community idealized by most progressives was built upon face-to-face contact, tight-knit families, civic participation, and institutions which maintained strong mutual bonds. Williamsburg's Rev. W. A. R. Goodwin, for example, especially feared that the cult of Napoleon and its excessive ambition would damage the Old Dominion's sense of community. Preaching a social gospel, he warned that the type of character formed by "the will to power" would not be one which led to "the permanent enrichment and elevation of human

²⁶Stanard, John Marshall and His Home, p. 19; Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, The Birth of the Nation, Jamestown, 1607 (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1907), pp. 261-262; Cynthia Coleman, "The Annals of Williamsburg, Virginia," MS., n.d., Coleman-Tucker Papers Box 101, CWM; "A Fine Address by General Roller," The Richmond Times, January 10, 1899.

life." Refuting the cult of success and the notion that the end justified the means, he even claimed that strong individualism was "personality run riot." What the individual should be taught, according to Goodwin's gospel, was that "the success and permanent worth of his endeavor as a seeker after truth and an experimenter in the great laboratory of experience, will be determined by his ability to contribute his ideas to the permanent inclusiveness and solidarity of the corporate Body."²⁷

These traditionalists generally defined the community according to the rural qualities of the preindustrial era. In an age when cities and machines cast a shadow over America's rural ethic, many preservationists romanticized the countryside and preached the virtues of the agrarian life. Although his Victorian-style country home Laburnum had all the modern amenities, Joseph Bryan experimented in scientific farming and continually urged the youth of Virginia to study nature. His Times also editorialized: "'There is a moralizing agency . . . in [personal] contact with the soil, in making things grow, in having a part in the creation of things necessary to man.'" His friend Thomas Nelson Page, despite his own affluent life style in the nation's capital, similarly praised rural living and reiterated the "conviction that city life, especially on the level of fashionable society, was evil and unwholesome." Typical of these beliefs was Mary Stanard's claim that John Marshall's honesty and "unaffected manners were largely due to his country breeding." What many preservationists believed was the commonly held notion that nature had a "regenerative power" over man's morality and spirit. Nature

²⁷Dewey W. Grantham, "The Contours of Southern Progressivism," American Historical Review 86 (December 1981):1044; Rev. Wm. A. R. Goodwin, The Church Enchained (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1916), pp. 36, 164-165.

and wilderness, Leo Marx added, also were considered sources of "virility" and fitted man with "aesthetic and ethical values."²⁸

Diligent work was one of those values and the cornerstone of character. According to Cynthia Coleman, John Smith was "second to none" in an era of great men and should be praised not simply for his own "energy" and "endurance," but for his hatred of "sloth" [sic] as well. Henry Clay became another model character for modern youth. "His beginning was so modest," claimed Thomas Nelson Page, "that no young man of integrity, ambition, industry and character need ever fear henceforth that however narrow his means, and contrasted his sphere, the highest position is not open to him. His life was so strenuous that no young man, however great his parts, can ever dare despise the necessity of earnest and persistent toil." These paeans to the work ethic and personal steps up the ladder of success fitted well with propertied classes which feared the collectivism apparent in the lower orders. While farmers were being wrenched by the corporate magnates and turning to populism, for example, Joseph Bryan wrote that "the true hope of the country people is on themselves--Diligent & intelligent work is the only solution of their troubles." Individualistic, unrelenting labor was the only means which these traditionalists recognized to cure an economy in chaos. Picturing that toil in Darwinistic terms, Bryan warned: "There is no doubt that in the intense competition now in all professions the weaklings are crushed, and only those who are very strong, or well armed, are

²⁸"Nature Study," The Richmond Times, November 9, 1902; Harriet R. Holman, "The Literary Career of Thomas Nelson Page, 1884-1910," unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Duke University, 1947, p. 136; Stanard, John Marshall and His Home, p. 28; Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 145, 228.

able to win in the struggle." This reading of Social Darwinism, Robert Wiebe observed, was common among traditionalists who "drew upon a rich tradition of village values . . . [which] read like a catalogue of mid-nineteenth century virtues."²⁹

Unlike the late nineteenth-century Napoleonic cult, the preservationists also stressed the qualities of wisdom, mental acumen, and grace in their heroes. What made Henry Clay a leader worthy of emulation, according to Page, "was the possession of the wisdom and the resolution to improve his mind . . . and his talents . . . so that he could obey the call of Duty." Joseph Bryan faulted many of his business associates for this inadequacy. "I really think, as I advance in life, and am associated with prominent business men," he wrote, "that the importance of a liberal and classical education grows upon me apace. I see men with everything except the power to enjoy; no taste for literature, art or science, and really weary under the load of their increasing fortunes." His Richmond friend, Edward V. Valentine, the noted sculptor of the Lost Cause and APVA advisor, agreed and thought that the teaching of history should instill these refinements. "One of the methods for the 'uplift' of the present generation," he wrote, "is the so-called object lesson. The expression was not heard so frequently before the War between the States though genuine 'uplifting object lessons' were more plentiful then than now. Living men and women were pointed to then as objects

²⁹Cynthia B. T. Coleman, "Jamestown," MS., n.d., Coleman-Tucker Papers, Box 102, CWM; Thomas Nelson Page, "Henry Clay and the Treaty of Ghent," February 22, 1913, MS., copy with corrections, Page Papers 20B-35, Duke; Joseph Bryan to H. C. Rice, April 12, 1895, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Joseph Bryan to Col. William E. Peters, July 5, 1888, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order: 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. 136.

worthy of study. From many of the old family portraits the present generation may learn what was meant by refinement and grace."³⁰

These forebears of Old Virginia, Valentine claimed were "noted for their dignity, simplicity, courtesy and naturalness. Their demeanor was far different from that of the head waiter manners too often seen in the drawing rooms of today." Mary Stanard similarly decried the frantic and materialistic pace of modernity. Again she set John Marshall as a contrast: "Maybe it was because intellectual gifts and accomplishments won more respect then, because modest incomes earned in the learned professions carried more prestige than riches made in business, because men cared more for distinction than for material display. . . . Had the American of Revolutionary times known modern luxuries, from bath tubs to automobiles, perhaps he would not have contented himself with the gentle toil of compounding state papers of thoughts that breathe and words that burn." These reasons led another preservationist, Thomas Nelson Page, to declare his love for old Yorktown where "all new ways and things seem to have been held at bay."³¹ For these preservationists old-time Virginia's grace and manners were important threads in the fabric of a hero. With modernity that fabric had unraveled, they claimed, and their society was at a loss.

The crux of the APVA's Gospel and critique of modernity was its

³⁰Thomas Nelson Page, "Henry Clay and the Treaty of Ghent," MS. copy with corrections, Page Papers, 20B-35, Duke; Joseph Bryan to Col. William E. Peters, May 11, 1889, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Edward V. Valentine, "My Recollections: Manners and Customs," MS. draft, December 14, 1923, VM.

³¹Edward V. Valentine, "My Recollections: Manners and Customs," MS. draft, December 14, 1923, VM; Stanard, John Marshall and His Home, p. 17; Thomas Nelson Page, "Old Yorktown," Scribner's Monthly 22 (October 1881): 803.

message that the idealism and moralism which they attributed to their forebears must be rekindled in the present. Reflecting upon a materialistic age when a figure such as Jay Gould was a hero, Joseph Bryan asked: "Could the founders of the Republic have foreseen the lowering of public virtue and elevation of the Goddess Success as a divinity to be worshipped?" Just as his friend J. L. M. Curry rebuked an "excessive devotion to Commercialism" and the "Klondike" spirit, Bryan and his fellow preservationists asked that a man's moral character, not his material success, be the judge of his person. James Alston Cabell, a member of the Advisory Board, expressed those sentiments when he spoke of Patrick Henry:

It is well with any land when her great men are sincere in their faith, devoted and unselfish in their love of country, and pure in their lives. It is said of Patrick Henry: "His morals were strict. As a husband, a father, a master, he has no superior. He was kind and hospitable to the stranger and most friendly and accommodating to his neighbors. In his dealing with the world, he was faithful to his promises, and punctual in his contracts to the utmost of his power. . . ." "Virtue, morality, and religion alone renders us invincible," he wrote to a friend. Well might Virginia point with pride to such a son and say, "Imitate my Henry."³²

The APVA's model of the heroic character obviously resembled the neo-classical ideal and stood as an antithesis of the Napoleonic individual. While these preservationists rebuked the cult of success, they were far from opposed to success and claimed that it should only come through a respect for the traditions and values which had been held by their forebears.

³²[Joseph Bryan], "Tendencies Unforeseen by the Founders of the Republic," The Richmond Daily Times, November 23, 1889; J. L. M. Curry, untitled address, June 15, 1901, Curry Papers I-13, LC; James Alston Cabell, Patrick Henry: An Address, delivered December 9, 1901 (Richmond: Everett Waddey Co., 1902), p. 11. Cabell even praised Henry for being a business failure, implying that it took immorality to succeed in those ventures. That sentiment was probably unique to Cabell.

What was most interesting about their neo-classic ideal was its limited relevance to a modern world where these lofty individualistic values, albeit often admirable, were trampled under by a chaotic economy, ruthless capitalists, gigantic cities, and industrial development. As sincere traditionalists these preservationists clung to the past and strove to make the present conform. While they did not always live up to their own high standards, their gospel was preached in the hope that the nouveaux riches and the restless working class would subscribe to traditional values and thereby still the possible threats to social order. Their ideal character, although partly a creation of wishful thinking and myth, mirrored the organic and cooperative society of the past. Preservationists considered its restoration to be the guarantee for all that they valued in Virginia.

Historic preservationists in the SPNEA labored as well to protect their past culture and their present identity. In doing so they enshrined the virtues and the values of their colonial forebears and used them as a gauge to evaluate the present. Like the leaders of the APVA, moreover, New England preservationists largely admired a rural, preindustrial past when the individual and community had not been upset by industries, metropolises, unions, and the immigration of peoples alien to their own culture. An important difference nevertheless set the SPNEA apart from the APVA. Whereas the Virginians had defined their Gospel of Preservation as the moralistic regeneration of the populace so as to protect the social hold of traditionalism upon Virginia, New England preservationists, on the other hand, had defined their goals more tightly. Although they were motivated by a desire to retain Anglo-Saxon culture and influence in a society buffeted by change, the leaders of the SPNEA, and in particular

Appleton, believed that historic preservation should first become a science and a profession which were managed in a businesslike fashion. As a result, the emotionalism and romanticism which pervaded the APVA's approach, and hence its sketching of the ideal hero, were largely absent from or discreet in the approach of the SPNEA. The sanctification and preservation of heroic models for modern emulation, therefore, took a back seat to Appleton's own mission of architectural preservation. What these New Englanders chose to preserve, however, was obviously a reflection of the values, life styles, and heroes which they admired, but that admiration was not always the overriding or the only reason for a building's preservation.

The personal character and virtue of the shapers of New England, preservationists reiterated, were the hallmarks of heroes, such as Harrison Gray Otis, and reified by their preserved homes. The Otis house was, according to SPNEA friend Carl Greenleaf Beede, a fitting symbol of an American whose wealth and distinction typified "the simplicity, the strength and possibly the sternness which we associate with the leaders of those times." Since Otis had been the apotheosis of Federalist leadership in New England, his character was highly praised by preservationists and their allies. When describing his character, writers evoked the rural ethic, his religious upbringing, and the adult discipline which had shaped his early years. While raised in Boston's rural environment, "an ideal place in which to bring up a boy" it was claimed, he was given the "best education" and "good religious training" by "broad-minded" parents and teachers, the latter of whom "did not spare the rod" to discipline him. After the Revolution he attended Harvard and became "'the first scholar of the first class of a new nation.'"

Following his father's bankruptcy he worked hard and long "to pay his debts" and redeem the family's honor. His personal fame and fortune subsequently stemmed from his "wise investments in real estate" and his "enviable position as a lawyer." All the while remaining a strong family man, Otis further deserved recognition for his service to the Boston community through local, state, and national political offices.³³ His sterling character aptly embodied the features of the neo-classic ideal.

If the life of Otis was memorialized as an example for modern politicians to emulate, then the character of Samuel Fowler would serve equally as well for modern businessmen. As the Society pictured Fowler, it stressed his simple beginnings and virtuous life. He had been "educated in the village school" where his seat was "a rude bench and his desk a portion of a board placed across two barrels." Raised in such a rigorous environment, he worked hard and became the prosperous owner of a number of mills in the area. Not only did he show innovation and acumen in his business, he was a concerned leader of his community as well. "He was public-spirited," the SPNEA explained, "and ever ready to aid financially such enterprises as tended to improve the village and town." Fowler's success, it was said, stemmed from his personal character. He was "strictly temperate, interested in the religious societies, and a regular attendant at the Unitarian meeting-house. . . . He enjoyed his apiary and orchard garden. . . . He rose regularly at four in the morning,

³³ Carl Greenleaf Beede, "Has a Dozen Houses, Wants More," The Christian Science Monitor, November 27, 1926; "The Otis Home--Boston's Newest Memorial," The Boston Sunday Herald, August 6, 1916; most of the research for the Herald article was provided by Samuel Eliot Morison.

winter and summer, and went to his mills to superintend the beginning of the day's work. He was of a kind and generous temperament, gladly helping others to help themselves, which was to his mind the wisest charity."³⁴ Evidently Fowler epitomized the Brahmin's ideal; his life illustrated the rural and work ethics, community spirit, interest in religion, and success in business. The worthy career of this successor to the Puritans served as a strong contrast with modern-day privatism, materialism, and excessive individualism.

The examples set by Otis and Fowler contrasted with the heroes who were prized by Virginians. Whereas the APVA honored its past soliders, statesmen, and lawyers, the SPNEA paid tribute to an early industrialist and a real estate speculator who, although concerned about the community, had shown their mastery of the economy. A further contrast between the personal traits honored by the APVA and the SPNEA would be the former's accent on refinement and the latter's concern for utility. After Charles K. Bolton studied the Scotch-Irish contribution to America, for example, he not only acknowledged their "virile, earnest and ambitious" characters, but their practicality as well. These forebears, the SPNEA president claimed, knew "nothing of aesthetics" because "utility was their law." SPNEA associate Wallace Nutting similarly praised the utility of early New England construction. "It is better that there should be no mark [on a building] that speaks loudly of design," he opined. "Strength and comfort and utility are to be satisfied first, and not an ornament should

³⁴"The Samuel Fowler House," Bulletin of the S.P.N.E.A. 3 (March 1912):3-4 [hereafter cited as the Bulletin].

be added for its own sake."³⁵ Since buildings were a true reflection of the character of their builders, Nutting expected those of the colonial era to reflect utility, strength, and a sense of permanence. These were the very characteristics which, he believed, modern society lacked.

SPNEA leaders also praised other personal virtues, including courage, commitment to freedom, devotion to family, and cleanliness. His Scotch-Irish forebears, Bolton wrote, had exemplified the pioneers' courage and fortitude as they fought for freedom against both the red man and the redcoats. The early workers at the Lynn Iron Works, Appleton claimed, were equally committed to liberty and the work ethic. They also "founded honorable families" and, unlike the Brahmin's estimation of modern-day immigrants, the Scotch Irish were "a worthy and cleanly lot" of immigrants.³⁶

These New England preservationists evidently sought to regenerate many of the same values and personal virtues which their Virginia counterparts admired. In an era of increasing collectivism and incorporation, these traditionalists ironically focused most of their attention upon the individual and his character. A moral rejuvenation of the person, they hoped, would ameliorate the maladies in their societies. They reiterated the copybook maxims which they had learned from their forefathers and these became the core values of their Gospel of Preservation. Preservationists strove to ensure that traditionalism would be the dominant

³⁵ Charles Knowles Bolton, Scotch Irish Pioneers in Ulster and America (Boston: Bacon and Brown, 1910), pp. 301, 303, 306; Nutting, Massachusetts Beautiful, p. 285.

³⁶ Bolton, Scotch Irish Pioneers, pp. 6, 11; Appleton to Annie S. Symonds, December 15, 1916, Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA.

philosophy of the leadership classes. They worked, therefore, not simply to ensure the loyalties of the First Families of Virginia and the Brahmins of Boston, but to attract and assimilate into their fold the arrivistes of wealth and standing as well. Preservationists encouraged these leadership classes to contribute to and shape society according to the precepts of traditionalism. The Gospel of Preservation, therefore would be inculcated into the populace by educators, publicists, social workers, and other leaders of society. Education as a result was not only a means of uplift, but also a subtle means of social control. The study and popularization of history, as defined by these traditionalist groups, acted as a brake upon the fast pace of change and as a counter to the threats against Anglo-Saxon hegemony.

An Institutional Base for the Civil Religion

As historic preservationists protected the past they helped to create an institutional base for America's civil religion. Not only did that religion include the revered values and virtues which were prized by most traditionalists, it more importantly rested upon the preserved symbols of the past. Historic sites and buildings became shrines or meccas. Ceremonies conducted at those sites, whether a group pilgrimage or an individual paying homage, became the rites by which the civil religion was solemnified. Select traditionalists, including preservationists and members of kindred societies, acted as interpreters of the sacred legends and as deacons charged with the protection of symbols which they had inherited from their forefathers. While both the APVA and the SPNEA monumentalized the civil religion through their preservation of certain sites and buildings, the leaders of the APVA were far more active and

zealous in its promotion. The different implementations of the Gospel of Preservation by the APVA and the SPNEA, therefore, led to separate roles in the civil religion.

Traditionalism became the philosophy which established the values of and direction for the civil religionists in the preservation movement. To explain this phenomenon a religion, according to Clifford Geertz, may be defined as: "(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing those conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic." Since the function of a religion is to link one's conception of the world with a code of conduct, great importance rests upon the devices used to make that linkage. As Geertz explained, the "meanings [of religion] can only be 'stored' in symbols." These symbols are then "dramatized in rituals or related in myths" and suggest "the way one ought to behave."³⁷

The symbols in the civil religion represented a way of life, an ethical code, and an order of existence which had been inherited from the past. The essence of any religion, he contended, was the preservation of those understandings about life. "Whatever else religion may be, it is in part an attempt (of an implicit and directly felt rather than an explicit and consciously thought-about sort) to conserve the fund of

³⁷Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 90; Geertz, "Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols," in The Interpretation of Cultures, p. 127. Since these symbols form the crux of a religion, Geertz warned that anthropologists and others must first analyze the meaning of the symbols and how they are used, and secondly, relate these symbols and systems to the social structure of the people who employ them; see his "Religion as a Cultural System," in The Interpretation of Cultures, p. 125.

general meanings in terms of which each individual interprets his experience and organizes his conduct." For the followers of a religion these symbols, moreover, acted both as models of and models for the self, society, and world; that is, the symbols reflected a past experience and suggested a model for the future.³⁸ They therefore not only induce, or even subtly coerce, chronic action in accordance with these values and models, but also create an aura of fact about that understanding of the past and present.

The American civil religion, according to Robert Bellah, is a religious dimension through which the American people interpret "its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality." Central components of this religion, he explained, included a myth of origins, the Revolution, the making of the Constitution, and a deistic symbolism associated with the Founding Fathers. The Revolution and the Constitution were equivalent to a conversion and a covenant experience which subsequently and continually needed reaffirmation in the following years.³⁹ Since the earliest years of the republic the ingredients of the religion jelled, Bellah claimed, as "a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things" and which were "institutionalized in a collectivity." The evangelical revivalism of the Second Great Awakening substantially transformed the civil religion by injecting a renewed

³⁸Geertz, "Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols," in The Interpretation of Cultures, p. 127; Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in The Interpretation of Cultures, p. 123.

³⁹Robert N. Bellah, The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial (New York: The Seabury Press, A Crossroad Book, 1975), p. 3. While Bellah marks the myth of origins as beginning in 1776, for the traditionalists of the APVA and the SPNEA the dates could have been 1607 and 1620 respectively; for the conversion and covenant experience, see The Broken Covenant, p. 35.

Protestant piety into the national consciousness and by imparting a sense of Protestant mission to citizen and nation. While the civil religion described by Bellah took on a new form with the Civil War, he admitted that there were "profoundly varying and indeed conflicting interpretations of even the most basic shared symbols" and events.⁴⁰ Those traditionalists who revered colonial values and their ancestry, therefore, retained the earlier interpretation and a primary focus upon the colonial, revolutionary, and early national eras.

While the civil religion was continually reaffirmed by inculcating a reverence for tradition, that reaffirmation has been influenced by both myths and the needs of the present generation. Myths in fact have been a central component in civil religions and perform the function of linking the individual and community in a collective identity. As Perry Miller explained, American myths have evolved over the years according to the manner in which the present used the past, but "each successive remodeling retains something of the previous form."⁴¹ By the late nineteenth century, a number of grande idées had developed as tenets of the civil religion. These included the sanctity of the American Revolution, the American mission in the world, the righteousness of constitutional

⁴⁰Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in Religion in America, ed. by William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 10; for the effects of the Second Great Awakening, see Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp. 44-45; Robert N. Bellah, "American Civil Religion in the 1970s," American Civil Religion, ed. by Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), p. 262.

⁴¹Perry Miller, "The Shaping of the American Character," New England Quarterly 28 (December 1944):452; Claude Levi-Strauss warned that a methodological limitation in mythography prevented the researcher from knowing the entire motivation of the purveyors of myth; see his The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology I (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1964), p. 3.

republicanism and a laissez-faire economy, and the holiness of patriotism. By the end of the century, that is when organized preservation began in Virginia, these tenets had become widely accepted beliefs.

The American idea of mission, for example, became a *sine qua non* of the civil religion and deeply ingrained into the national psyche. Although there was some disagreement whether that mission should be global or continental, Americans were nonetheless convinced of their historical destiny. As Edward M. Burns observed:

A strong conviction of a call to greatness is almost certain to foster worship of the past. Especially if the call is regarded in any sense a divine one, the nation must be assumed to have been grand and noble from the beginning. The ideals of its founders therefore become sacrosanct, and its constitution takes on the character of a primitive fetish. In addition, its prophets are very likely to hark back to precursor peoples [Anglo-Saxons in this case] in some storied epochs of the past. As a result, the ideals and institutions of remote ancestors may also become objects of worship.

This millennial mission required the "redeemer nation" and the American people, Ernest Tuveson added, to carry out two duties: "to expand and perfect a society which is closer to the millennial condition than any before it; and to maintain an integrity unknown previously in any other country."⁴²

Such notions and their prominent place in schoolbooks obviously influenced not only the Gospel of Preservation, but the civil religion as well. As Henry Steele Commager noted, "when the [late nineteenth-century] American read history, it was to find confirmation of the moral

⁴²Edward McNall Burns, The American Idea of Mission: Concepts of National Purpose and Destiny (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957), p. viii; Ernest Lee Tuveson, Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 159.

truths preached in the churches and taught in the schools. His historians arrived, almost by instinct, at the conclusion . . . that the significance of history was to be found in the struggle for freedom. The history of America vindicated this conclusion, as it did faith in progress, in the validity of democracy and equality, and in the ultimate triumph of right over wrong." Since these ideas were religiously held, their advocates were not likely to tolerate dissent. Accordingly, and as Ruth Elson explained, obedience to the American government was taught in schoolbooks as a virtual commandment and rebellion against the American system, whether political or economic, was "the greatest crime, because almost by definition the United States represents liberty and cannot be tyrannical. Rebellion against it is rebellion against liberty." Schooling and the study of American history, therefore, were used to sanctify the American system, and as Wallace E. Davies observed, "to counteract the immense foreign immigration which knew little of the obligations of American citizenship and might otherwise become the source of various forms of radicalism, particularly anarchism."⁴³

The deacons of the civil religion and the protectors of one-hundred-percent Americanism were the leaders of patriotic, ancestral, and anti-quarian societies, the very groups which not incidentally formed both the APVA and the SPNEA. Most historic preservation leaders belonged to one or more of these kindred organizations and the patriotic and preservation movements worked generally in tandem. William Sumner Appleton, for

⁴³ Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 36; Ruth M. Elson, Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 290; Wallace Evan Davies, Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), pp. 241, 242.

example, declared that the formation of his SPNEA was "a new departure in historic, patriotic work." Like the SPNEA, the APVA worked shoulder to shoulder with various patriotic organizations in their common efforts for historic preservation. The Daughters of the American Colonists, a society which contributed an ornamental iron fence to the APVA for Jamestown, for example, declared that their association's objects were "to inculcate and foster the love of America and its institutions by all its residents; [and] to obey its laws and venerate its flag, the emblem of its power and civic righteousness."⁴⁴

Patriotism and an obedience to government, therefore, became the foremost principles in the civil religion. Cynthia Coleman, principal organizer of the APVA, accordingly considered historic preservation to be the recognition of the divine hand in American history. "Love of Country is religion for it is God given," she believed, "and the heart that is not moved by it is fit for 'treasons, stratagems and spoils.'" Her notion was fairly typical inasmuch as schoolbooks consistently inculcated a deep loyalty to the state and nation. As Ruth M. Elson explained, "the sentiment of patriotism, love of country, vies with the love of God as the cornerstone of virtue. . . . Every book contains many pieces sustaining the doctrine that one's loyalty to country must be paramount to all other loyalties." By the end of the nineteenth century, however, most preservationists believed that their fealty to the state and locale was not contrary or detrimental to national patriotism. They claimed in fact that an allegiance to community, locality, and state was the necessary

⁴⁴Appleton to Caroline P. Heath, May 5, 1910, Daughters of the American Revolution file, SPNEA; Emma L. Crowell, "Building Historic Shrines," n.d., in Scrapbook, 1921-1935, Daughters of the American Colonists file, VHS.

foundation for nationalism. The patriotic heroes praised by these preservationists, moreover, were ones who had been associated with the building of the state and nation. In the late nineteenth century, Peter Karsten noted as well, the reputations of antistatist heroes had sharply declined, a fact which was accentuated by "the advent of communism and socialism--socioeconomic revolution." While traditionalists in turn stressed the conservative nature and the righteousness of America's Revolution, "the very notion of [modern] revolution," Karsten observed, "became abhorrent."⁴⁵

An essential feature of the patriotism and civil religion advocated by these traditionalists, therefore, was its definition according to the personal perspectives and cultural needs of its spokesmen. As Merle Curti wisely explained, "what one man deems the best interest of the country . . . , another declares to be mere class or sectional, rather than national interest. What, if anything, constitutes a criterion for determining genuinely national interest? Man has a peculiar way of making himself--and others--believe that what is really in his own interest, is actually unselfish devotion to his fellows, and to his country." Since the Progressive era, he added, patriotism has been equated with "Americanism" which has implied the protection of free enterprise and laissez-faire capitalism, private virtue and initiative, and the maintenance of the

⁴⁵ Cynthia B. T. Coleman, untitled essay, n.d., Tucker-Coleman Papers, Box 103, CWM; Elson, Guardians of Tradition, p. 282; for an explanation of the bond between national, regional, and state loyalties see David M. Potter, "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," in History and American Society: Essays of David M. Potter, ed. by Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 60-108; Peter Karsten, Patriot-Heroes in England and America: Political Symbolism and Changing Values over Three Centuries (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 72.

economic and social status quo.⁴⁶

During the Progressive era preservationists in Virginia and New England protected the symbols of the past in order to monumentalize the civil religion and defend their conception of America. The most important symbols in the civil religion, other than the flag and documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, were the preserved homes of august patriots, such as Paul Revere and Harrison Gray Otis, and public buildings such as Williamsburg's Powder Horn or Fredericksburg's Rising Sun Tavern. Both the APVA and the SPNEA aided the civil religion, yet the Virginians were more strident in their acts of homage and declarations of loyalty.

This noticeable difference between the APVA and the SPNEA stemmed from the differing implementations of the Gospel of Preservation. While the Virginians were most interested in historic preservation as a moralistic and cultural movement, Appleton and the SPNEA placed a heavy accent upon early American aesthetics and architectural preservation. The leaders of the APVA, moreover, publicly used the civil religion to strengthen the principles of conservatism and states' rights in a nation which was too liberal and centralized for their liking. They felt obligated as well to prove Virginia's national loyalty after the secession of 1861. The APVA's tone also reflected many of the notions of the Victorian feminine sphere; the inculcation of patriotism and the care of graves were charged to women. Since New England's patriotic societies

⁴⁶Merle E. Curti, The Roots of American Loyalty (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), pp. viii, ix. For the opposition of so-called patriots to un-Americanisms such as the child labor amendment, see Norman Hapgood, ed., Professional Patriots (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Publishers, 1927), p. 37.

were well developed, they undertook many of these same tasks. Their members were affluent and very willing to promote the monumentalization of the civil religion, and Appleton encouraged them as they preserved buildings associated with past patriotism. The patriotic societies of Virginia, on the other hand, lacked the financial resources and the membership strength which were needed to undertake this calibre of preservation work. The net effect of these factors was that the Virginia preservationists were more zealous promoters of the civil religion in their public ceremony and historical interpretation. Both organizations nevertheless created shrines and museums to honor the patriotic heroes of either early Virginia or New England.

A site or building became sacred in the civil religion if it held an important association with a leader or hero who had become a saint or martyr in the hagiology of patriotism. As Dixon Wecter explained, "hero-worship is a secular religion" and "a form of ancestor worship." This reverence for patriots actually served the needs of modern civil religionists. The effects of hero worship upon these individuals, W. Lloyd Warner noted, were threefold: The hero's "actual presence stimulates those who believe in him to project their own private feelings and beliefs directly on him. His presence also serves as a model for their imitation and learning and for the measurement of their own moral inadequacies. Further, the hero arouses the hopes and fears of those who believe in him, and he energizes and gives social direction to some of their anxieties." The study and emulation of heroes, he added, also "bind and control us" because "they take us beyond ourselves and permit us to

identify with the ideals of our culture."⁴⁷ One way for a citizen to understand an abstract concept or principle, therefore, is by personifying it through a hero. The most important aspect of hero-worship, however, was the interpretation which was given to the hero. If he was to be a model for modern emulation and societal needs, then his virtues and values, whether factual or mythical, would be accordingly stressed.

When Virginia preservationists worshipped their heroes of the past, they considered the buildings and sites associated with them to be meccas and sacred shrines. Jamestown was the most sacred of these meccas, and, according to the APVA's claim, the foundation stone for American Protestantism, American civil government, and the Virginia family. The Association deserved the thanks of the whole nation, APVA president Lora Ellyson opined, because it had "recreated this hallowed ground and made it safe for patriotic organizations to build memorials and shrines, which upon becoming our property are faithfully protected and cared for. Also by this service to the nation," she added, "a setting has been provided for religious and other exercises which are of vital interest to the people."⁴⁸

Jamestown evoked patriotic feelings from its visitors, Thomas Nelson Page exclaimed, because it was "the emblem of that earnest, devoted and patriotic zeal which inspires the heart of every true Freeman." He

⁴⁷Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966), p. 8; W. Lloyd Warner, The Living and the Dead; A Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 15, 97. Carlton Hayes has in fact compared the hero-worship of modern nationalism with the rituals and saints of medieval Christianity; see his Nationalism: A Religion (New York: Macmillan Company, 1960), pp. 165-168.

⁴⁸"President's Report Submitted to Virginia Antiquities Group," Richmond Times-Dispatch, January 9, 1927.

contended that Virginia, not New England, was the nucleus for patriotism and the fountainhead of civil values. Jamestown moreover stood for one-hundred-percent Americanism, Page boasted, because it was "the real Cradle of the American People wherever they may be, and of that for which they stand fundamentally, however they may express it." His associate John Lesslie Hall likewise believed that the site was a "place of consecration" where the citizen should declare his "love [for] . . . state and country." The APVA's church on the island, he declared to the Virginia legislature, was a "sacred shrine" and "our most precious building. It is our Acropolis, our Forum, and our Temple of Diana. It is our great Temple of Faith and our Temple of Justice." That church served the purposes of both civil and Protestant religions. Virginia preservationists considered the remains of the ruin to be "relics" and other Protestant churches even requested bricks from the site to place in their consecrated altars.⁴⁹ Jamestown represented therefore Virginia's claim to priority in government, her brand of nationalism founded upon states' rights, the establishment of Protestantism in North America, and the supremacy of Anglo-Saxons. Such features jelled and became the civil religion's divinely-sanctioned, Protestant mission to evangelize conservative, constitutional government throughout the land.

⁴⁹Thomas Nelson Page, Address at the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement of Jamestown, p. 27; John Lesslie Hall, Introductory Address Delivered . . . at the Jamestown Celebration, May 13th, 1891 (Richmond: J. L. Hill Printing Co., n.d.), p. 7; Hall "The Meeting Place of the First Virginia Assembly," in Exercises and Addresses at the Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the First Law Making Body in the Western Hemisphere, p. 8, Hall Papers, CWM; concerning the church's request see Board of Managers meeting, October 4, 1913, Minute Book of the APVA 1908-1914, VHS [hereafter cited as MB/APVA]; for the fusion of Protestantism with nationalism see also Martin E. Marty, "Two Kinds of Two Kinds of Civil Religion," in American Civil Religion, ed. by Richey and Jones, p. 146.

Although Jamestown was the APVA's most sacred site, other meccas included the foundations of the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg, Mary Washington's Fredericksburg home, Patrick Henry's "Scotchtown," and the homes of John Marshall and Robert E. Lee in Richmond. As Cynthia Coleman explained to the preservationists,

the spot where some great struggle for life and liberty had been made, some powerful resistance to the oppressions of government became a "Mecca of the mind" to this Association. To secure the spot, to place upon it some memorial that he who comes may read of the heroic sacrifice made by the early settlers of the Colony, the strength of mind and will that framed the laws for the wise administration of a new and untried government, the patriotism that . . . [won] freedom from injustice and tyrannous actions--is an object lesson which may well arrest the attention of the most careless and awaken the interest of the most indifferent.⁵⁰

Mary Washington and Patrick Henry were revered by the APVA and their homes became meccas. Since George Washington stood at the apex of the hagiology of American patriots, it was little wonder that his mother Mary was canonized as well. As Bernard Mayo suggested, this "apotheosis was complete when they compared Washington to Christ and his mother to the Virgin Mary." Sara Pryor reiterated that comparison when she wrote of her: "She conducted herself through this life with virtue and prudence worthy of the mother of the greatest hero that ever adorned the annals of history. There is no fame in the world more pure than that of the mother of Washington, and no woman, since the mother of Christ, has left a better claim to the affectionate reverence of mankind." The life of Patrick Henry also led traditionalists to render sacred homage. APVA advisor James Alston Cabell urged Virginians to study his portrait, an icon in the civil religion, "as an example of pure and exalted manhood,

⁵⁰ Cynthia B. T. Coleman, untitled address, n.d., Coleman-Tucker Papers, Box 103, CWM.

of devotion to country, and consecration to duty. The habit of recalling examples will soon produce the habit of imitating them," Cabell predicted. "In following the course of great men remember while you may not rise to the full measure of their greatness, yet you must determine not to fall below their standard of duty and obligation."⁵¹ His home at Scotchtown, as well as Mary Washington's Fredericksburg home, therefore stood as preserved monuments or meccas which remind visitors of their own duty to state and nation.

The sacred reverence with which traditionalists regarded another symbol of the civil religion, the national Constitution, became pervasive during the Progressive era when many Americans were warned that the advance of socialism, union collectivism, and mass democracy would threaten law and property. Since patriots had earlier transformed the Constitution into a holy "sacrament" of the civil religion, the APVA moved to enshrine the John Marshall house in Richmond. The house of the chief justice became "a shrine of American constitutionalism," claimed his noted biographer, Senator Albert J. Beveridge, and its preservation and maintenance were "well nigh sacred" duties. The Association's interpretation of the shrine not only stressed Marshall's noble example, but also the duty of patriots to preserve order and honor the Constitution. One visitor to the house in 1917 accordingly wrote in the guest book:

⁵¹ Bernard Mayo, Myths and Men: Patrick Henry, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1959), p. 45; Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, Mother of Washington and Her Times, pp. 355-356; J. Alston Cabell, Patrick Henry: An Address, pp. 1, 2. For a similar statement on the role of portraits as an inspiration for patriotism see Joseph Bryan to Judge T. R. B. Wright, May 27, 1898, Bryan Letterbook, VHS.

"'Proud to worship at the shrine of the greatest Chief Justice.'"⁵²

The APVA's advocacy of the civil religion also included the hero worship of Robert E. Lee and the monumentalization of his Richmond war-time home. If the homage of Marshall represented Virginia's legalistic sense of nationalism, then its adulation of Lee symbolized loyalty to states' rights and the Old Dominion. The figure of Lee, however, remained controversial in the 1890s. As Joseph Bryan hinted, "Washington remains the unrivalled example for the youth of this country. We Virginians have another to whom with increasing admiration we may point our sons, but his merits are as yet not understood by a large body of our fellow countrymen. It will not always be so." Within a decade that would change, Thomas Connelly explained, when Lee would be "inducted into the Hall of Fame" and praised by American presidents. The general was admired for his self-sacrificing devotion to duty, honor, and principle, claimed Samuel C. Mitchell in a Phi Beta Kappa address at the College of William and Mary. "It was this Christly principle reappearing in the concrete experience of Lee," he opined, "that has forever made the core of his character a perennial study for mankind."⁵³ When the APVA

⁵²Catherine L. Albanese, Sons of the Fathers: The Civil Religion of the American Revolution (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), p. 182; Albert J. Beveridge to Philip L. Leidy, December 29, 1921, Marshall House Fund Drive, Box 6, APVA; quoted in Meeting of December 4, 1917, MB/APVA 1914-21, VHS.

⁵³Joseph Bryan to Capt. Richard Irby, January 30, 1897, Bryan Letterbook, VHS; Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 85; Samuel C. Mitchell, "The Vicarious Element in the Character of Lee," MS., December 5, 1911, Mitchell Papers Box 9, LC. The adulation of Lee approached the humorous at times. W. Gordon McCabe, the noted schoolmaster and also friend of the APVA, "walked to the site [of the Lee Statue in Richmond] at four each afternoon, winter and summer, to salute the equestrian figure. He taught his son to do the same thing"; see Michael B. Chesson, Richmond After the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981), p. 206.

monumentalized his Richmond home and, together with the Virginia Historical Society, used it as their headquarters, the life of Robert E. Lee served as a constant reminder of Virginia's defense of the state's role in the national compact and the civil religion.

While the APVA actively promoted its own interpretation of the civil religion, historic preservationists in the SPNEA aided the cause more subtly. Appleton encouraged other patriotic organizations to preserve shrines and memorials for the civil religion and the Society contributed funds to their campaigns. The corresponding secretary and the SPNEA, however, became more involved with the aesthetics and artistry of early buildings, rather than with their patriotic symbolism. Somewhat ironically Appleton had been pulled into the preservation movement through his membership in the Sons of the Revolution and their patriotic work. While engineering the drive to save the Paul Revere home in Boston, he wanted the house to serve as a "'patriotic memorial'" which would act as "'a constant incentive to patriotic citizenship and the study of our national history.'" As chairman of the Advisory Committee on Cooperation in Patriotic Work, he later worked in Lexington to protect buildings associated with the Revolution, such as the Old Belfry, Buckman Tavern, and the Harrington house. The latter dwelling, once owned by a Minute Man who had died in the encounter of April 19, 1775, symbolized the highest calibre of patriotism, he claimed, and it acted as one of "the strongest reminder[s] of the . . . heroism, sacrifice, and devotion to duty" shown by that generation. Appleton also worked to make Buckman Tavern "'a national memorial to the Minute Men of 1775'" since it was here that they "spent the hours preceding the arrival of the British at Lexington Common on the 19th of April, 1775." A site such as the Buckman Tavern was "a

mecca of such importance" that its preservation, he felt, was essential.⁵⁴ Since the patriotic societies undertook their preservation work with a limited concern for archaeological accuracy, however, Appleton formed the SPNEA as both a patriotic and historical organization.

Whenever the SPNEA campaigned to preserve a dwelling which symbolized one-hundred-percent Americanism and patriotism, it aided the cause of the civil religion and created a memorial where its values could be regenerated. The Society made clear, for example, that Samuel Fowler had been the son of a patriot who had served at Lexington in 1775, while Harrison Gray Otis had exemplified the model statesman of the republic because of his commitment to a strong defense and his service to state and nation. SPNEA officer George Dudley Seymour went so far as to acquire personally the Nathan Hale homestead in Connecticut and to preserve it "as a memorial to Captain Nathan Hale, the Martyr Spy of the Revolutionary War." Considering the martyr to be "'the supreme symbol of patriotism, next to the flag,'" Seymour in later years served as Hale's hagiographer and also successfully lobbied American presidents to establish a Hale postage stamp. His fervent work was such that, Elizabeth Stillinger concluded, "without these zealous promotions Nathan Hale would not be a household word today." Appleton never matched the zealotry of his cousin Seymour, but his work was directly defined within the context of promoting patriotism. As he labored to preserve the Shirley-Eustis house in Roxbury, for instance, he suggested that the restored house could serve

⁵⁴ Appleton quoted in "Paul Revere Memorial," unidentified newspaper, n.d., Revere Scrapbook, SPNEA; for the Harrington house see Appleton to Caroline P. Heath, May 5, 1910, Daughters of the American Revolution file, SPNEA; for the tavern see Appleton to A. E. Locke, January 4, 1913, Appleton to Charles Francis Adams, November 14, 1912, and Appleton to A. E. Locke, January 10, 1913, Buckman Tavern file, SPNEA.

as "a valuable centre for much patriotic-historic work" to inspire both Yankee and immigrant alike.⁵⁵ Usually, however, the SPNEA aided the civil religionists, rather than leading their cause.

The differences between the APVA's and the SPNEA's Gospel of Preservation stand out clearly as well concerning the role of cemeteries in the civil religion. The ladies of the APVA were charged by Victorian and Old Virginia society with the protection of graves; that obligation subsequently became a means to promote both the gospel and the civil religion. The male leaders of the SPNEA, on the other hand, implemented their gospel primarily through a preservation of the past's built environment. They consigned the task of cemetery work almost entirely to the patriotic and church societies. The care of graveyards, nonetheless, was an important ingredient in the civil religion. As W. Lloyd Warner noted, "gravestones and the cemetery are two of the very few most dramatic and powerful symbols referring to the ideal parts of our past and reaffirming our respect for our traditions." They are, moreover, of "particular significance in a status society" because the upper class stresses its lineage to the past in order "to validate its claim to superiority and its position at the apex of the class system." As a result, "the graveyard is often the ultimate demonstration and source of social power." Memorial services held in the cemetery are cults of the dead, Warner continued, which emphasize the deceased's sacrifice and

⁵⁵George Dudley Seymour to Appleton, April 22, 1915, Seymour file, SPNEA; Elizabeth Stillinger, The Antiquers: The Lives and Careers, the Deals, the Finds, the Collections of the Men and Women Who Were Responsible for the Changing Taste in American Antiques, 1850-1930 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), pp. 93, 94; for the Roxbury house see Appleton, Circular Letter, June 16, 1913, Circular Letter file, SPNEA.

the living's obligation to follow suit.⁵⁶ These services, therefore, link past and present, individual and community, in a common bond and purpose. They serve the civil religion when their goal is to regenerate and consecrate the citizen's obligation to the national mission, the ideals of the republic, and the greater society.

The APVA devoted considerable energies to the preservation and maintenance of graveyards which had associations with colonial and revolutionary leaders. Although it is natural for men to honor their war dead and forebears, Wilbur Cash nevertheless questioned if "the process has ever elsewhere been carried to the length to which it was carried in the South in this time." The APVA's care for graves also illustrated the links between organized Protestantism and the civil religion. Speaking for the Association, Cynthia Coleman declared that these tombs in deserted burial grounds were "all calculated to stir the blood of those who can trace their ancestry to these Colonial grandees. Their old homes in many instances, are gone or else crumbling into decay, but their dust remains a sacred legacy, and the epitaphs upon their tombs, broken and falling away record their abounding virtue." The "sacred ashes" of these ancestors were worthy of protection and honor, another preservationist declared, because these forebears had been "illustrious pioneers in the cause of Progress and Freedom, the fruits of whose labor we enjoy." It was "an appropriate and pious work for Christian women" to undertake this task, the APVA declared. The Association's president Belle Bryan accordingly suggested that each locality should not only

⁵⁶ Warner, The Living and the Dead, p. 32. Although Appleton considered the acquisition of graveyards as a possible goal when he began the SPNEA in 1910, he did not pursue that course.

protect the tombs of the grandees, but also those "of the pioneer settler of the community, the head of a family, the honored pastor, or the young soldier who gave his life for his home and country."⁵⁷

The APVA itself took charge of a number of graves associated with the relatives of George Washington. It also helped in the removal of Nathaniel Bacon's tombstone to Williamsburg and James Monroe's remains to Richmond. Sometimes members of the Association joined with other patriots from kindred societies to preserve the cemeteries. Sara Pryor, for example, rallied with other elite female cultists to form the Mary Washington Memorial Association and pledged to undertake "a perpetual vigil over the tomb of Mary Washington, thus forming a Guard of Honor of six hundred American women." Members of the APVA's Advisory Board considered a proposal through the Virginia Historical Society to remove the remains of Patrick Henry from "Red Hill" to a Richmond churchyard. While some predicted that the removal would create a burst of patriotism in Virginia, Morgan P. Robinson endorsed the idea because "the consecrated ground of St. John's will not be invated [sic] by vandals of either social-climbing, or commercialistic proclivities."⁵⁸ Evidently the protection of

⁵⁷W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 310; Cynthia B. T. Coleman, untitled address in Baltimore, Maryland, March 1896, Coleman-Tucker Papers, Box 103, CWM; "Mount Vernon Branch," Year Book of the APVA, 1895, p. 72 [hereafter cited as YB/APVA]; Circular Letter dated January 1903 in "Report of the President for 1903," YB/APVA, 1901-04, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁸For an example of graves associated with Washington, see Belle Bryan, "President's Report," YB/APVA, 1898 & 1899, p. 10; Pryor, The Mother of Washington and Her Times, pp. 5-6; Morgan P. Robinson to W. G. Stanard, June 20, 1920, Stanard file, VHS. Not all of the APVA's work in cemeteries was part of the civil religion. The Williamsburg Branch, for example, proposed in 1920 to move the tombstone of Lady Skipwith to Bruton Church "hoping by so doing her ghost, which is said to haunt the [Wythe] house, will thereafter sleep quietly"; see Annual Meeting, January 6, 1920, MB/APVA 1914-21, VHS.

these graves was the specific charge of the deacons of the civil religion. It was an inheritance claimed by the traditionalist elite in the name of the public good and in the service of the civil religion.

While Virginia preservationists were concerned with the "sacred ashes" of their ancestors and even went so far as to reinter them in protected environs, Appleton and the SPNEA took an entirely different tack. When Celeste Bush of East Lyme, Connecticut proposed the exhumation of the bodies of some forebears from an old graveyard, the corresponding secretary advised her that all she would find would be "a thin layer of slime" and "a few metal buttons." Instead he suggested: "If I were you I would limit my interest in those graves to the gravestone, for those have permanent value." These stones should either be "imbedded in the wall of some church building" or "well protected within the walls of a museum."⁵⁹ Always interested in the past's material culture, Appleton's estimation of a gravestone's "permanent value" was in stark contrast with the APVA's consideration of sacred value in the ashes. Although each philosophy could serve the interests of the civil religion, the APVA's approach again was more dramatic, while the SPNEA's was more subtle.

Commemorative ceremonies and rituals were held by the APVA in support of the civil religion. While these public ceremonies were partly Protestant observances, particularly some aspects of the rites held at graveyards, they also furthered the cause of patriotism and one-hundred-percent Americanism. The purpose of these rituals, which included

⁵⁹ Appleton to Celeste Bush, January 13, 1915, Thomas Lee House file, SPNEA. Actually it was common for antiquarians to reinter the remains of the dead and thereby serve modern purposes. One speaker before the English Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings called this "cult" of the dead "antiquarianism run mad"; see "High Indignation at Digging Up of Scores of Bodies," Richmond News-Leader, June 1, 1923.

historical recitations and the decoration of graves, was the unification of past and present by means of sacred symbols and myths. As Clifford Geertz explained, through ritual behavior "the moods and motivations which sacred symbols induce in men and the general conceptions of the order of existence which they formulate for men meet and reinforce one another. In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world."⁶⁰ Sometimes these rituals were even accompanied by costumed interpreters, military bands, and the recreated ambiance of a lost era. The net effect was one of visual authenticity superimposed over a presentation based on myths, symbols, and tendentious history.

The most important ritual and ceremony for the APVA was its annual pilgrimage to Jamestown on or about May 13th to celebrate the founding of Virginia. That ritual brought thousands to the island and, as one Richmond paper acknowledged, "for many years, the pilgrimages--they are that, not 'excursions'--offered about the only opportunity extended the people of Richmond to visit the cradle of the race." May 13th was such an important date precisely because it commemorated the Anglo-Saxon's advent and control in Virginia. The Fourth of July, on the other hand, had once been "celebrated with great fervor and enthusiasm," J. L. M. Curry explained, but with Civil War and Reconstruction the celebration fell into "desuetude" in the South. Actually the date had become a Negro holiday and "while blacks paraded and listened to oratory, the whites

⁶⁰Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in The Interpretation of Cultures, p. 112; see also Hayes, Nationalism: A Religion, pp. 164-165; for an examination of ceremony based upon manipulated symbols and myth see Warner, The Living and the Dead, Chapters 4 and 5.

remained at home."⁶¹ By the 1920s, however, white supremacy and one-hundred-percent Americanism had prompted patriots to reappropriate and celebrate the Fourth of July.

Historic preservationists also opened their properties to other civil religionists for the celebration of patriotic events. When England's Sulgrave Institute visited the United States in 1920, the APVA invited them to Jamestown to commemorate jointly the establishment of Virginia's legislative government in 1619. According to one published account, a solemn band of Virginians, New Englanders, and Britons "entered reverently the little church on Jamestown Island for the most remarkable and awe inspiring service in all its long history." These modern-day pilgrims, moreover, came not "as separate people to worship at this shrine. They came as representatives of one race, whose pioneers have carried the torch of liberty and the ideal of free government to every corner of the earth." Ceremonies such as these not only confirmed America's mission in the world, but Jamestown's symbolism as the cradle of the republic as well. The SPNEA, on the other hand, never matched the public zealotry and exposure of the APVA in this civil religion. The Society neither owned such an important site as Jamestown nor wished to lead these public rituals. When asked to open the SPNEA's properties, however, Appleton gladly accommodated the civil religionists, such as in 1917 when he and Wallace Nutting entertained and lectured the Sons of the American Revolution during their Fall Field Day at the Boardman house

⁶¹"The Jamestown Pilgrimage," unidentified newspaper, May 10, 1927, in President's Report of Meetings, 1926-1927, APVA; J. L. M. Curry, "New Elements and Dangers," n.d. [c. 1889], Curry Papers II-12, Scrapbook C, LC; Simkins and Roland, A History of the South, p. 391.

and Saugas Iron Works.⁶²

The SPNEA's limited commitment to the sanctification of the civil religion was perhaps best illustrated by Appleton's attitude towards the religion's most supreme symbol, the American flag. Quite typical of the Brahmin who always kept his enthusiasm harnessed, Appleton's sense of patriotism, although thoroughly engrained, was nonetheless restrained. While he considered the SPNEA a patriotic organization and forged strong alliances with kindred societies, the corresponding secretary still questioned the cult of the flag which these societies had endorsed and lobbied for legislative enactment. Although he approved of the proposed ban on the commercialistic use of the nation's flag, he admitted that he was not "wholly in sympathy with them" on their other restrictions. Appleton actually was as much a state patriot as a national one and he objected, therefore, to the legal requirement that the American flag should precede all others in a procession. "The idea of obliging it by law to be carried ten feet in front of any flag," he thought, "is a gratuitous insult to these others and an absurdity if the Commonwealth is included also."⁶³

Years later Appleton objected as well to the national flag code which had been enacted in 1923. The stipulation that the American flag should never be dipped to that of another nation, he believed, made America "appear discourteous" and "cause[d] irritation" among other nations.

⁶²W. B. Southall, "Acclaim Virginia as Real Cradle of the Republic," The Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 8, 1920; for the Fall Field Day, see Johnson Scrapbook, Boardman House file, SPNEA.

⁶³Appleton to Walter Gilman Page, January 31, 1913, Page file, SPNEA; for the flag cult see Curti, The Roots of American Loyalty, pp. 190-191 and Davies, Patriotism on Parade, p. 219.

The flag code also ordered that the United States flag should never touch the ground. Appleton evidently considered this point ludicrous and wrote to the chairman of the flag committee: "Just what you have against the sacred soil of the United States, I don't understand or why the flag is in any way superior to it. It would seem to me that the flag owes allegiance to the soil fully as much as the soil to the flag." What Appleton objected to in general was that "plenty of individuals seem to feel called upon to be self-appointed censors of the conduct of others with reference to the flag and to make trouble unless this [flag display] is done the way they [think it] should be done." The flag code, he concluded, was "provocative" and in fact led to "violent or discourteous conduct" towards the flag.⁶⁴

The advocacy of the civil religion, therefore, brought out the differences between the APVA and the SPNEA and their contrasting implementations of the Gospel of Preservation. Appleton's chiding of the "self-appointed censors" of public conduct, however, should not obscure his and the SPNEA's contributions, albeit limited, to the further establishment of the civil religion. The preserved homes of Paul Revere, Governor Shirley, Harrison Gray Otis, the Scottish pioneers of Saugus, and other New Englanders were used by the civil religionists as shrines to honor the traditions and values of old-time New England and as symbols for one-hundred-percent Americanism. Since the SPNEA had committed itself to the actual work of preservation, it left the task of popularization, including the promotion of the civil religion, to its allies--societies which also preserved buildings and shrines--in the common cause of

⁶⁴ Appleton to Garland W. Powell, July 26, 1928, Flag file, SPNEA.

patriotism.

Developing some two decades before the SPNEA's establishment and shaped by different circumstances, the APVA had undertaken the promotion of the civil religion as part of its broadly interpreted Gospel of Preservation. Unlike New England, Virginia at the time lacked the developed infrastructure of patriotic organizations which preserved their own shrines. Conscious of the recurrent charges of treason for the 1861 secession, Virginia's preservationists, moreover, felt impelled to prove both the loyalty of the Old Dominion to the Union and the primacy of Virginia in the national compact. The advocacy of the civil religion became natural for the APVA as well because the Victorian feminine sphere had charged women to be the teachers of morals, virtues, and patriotism. The protection of graves, the preservation of historical symbols, and the memorialization of traditions acted within this context to inspire the future. Since the APVA's definition of historic preservation was more moralistic than that of the SPNEA, its mission to monumentalize the past so as to inspire the present, therefore, accorded well with the civil religion.

Traditionalism as a Hegemonic System

The years from the 1880s through the First World War were deeply troubling for Americans who prized tradition and their ancestors' roles in the nation's history. During this age of industrialization, urbanization, and nationalization, Robert H. Wiebe explained, "dislocation and bewilderment" had set in. "America in the late nineteenth century was a society without a core." Throughout all of this, Americans "tried desperately to understand the larger world in terms of their small,

familiar environment. They tried, in other words, to impose the known upon the unknown, to master an impersonal world through the customs of a personal society."⁶⁵ Other factors as well influenced the drive by preservationists to protect the past. APVA leaders like Cynthia Coleman and Joseph Bryan turned to the past in order to help change the present. They not only faced a Virginia that had been humiliated by poverty and despair, but also a traditionalist society which had been disoriented, they claimed, by emancipation, recent radicalism, and a loss of community. Preservationists in New England, on the other hand, saw their region rapidly losing its Yankee identity as the immigrants rushed in, the cities grew, and industrialism reigned. For William Sumner Appleton Beacon Hill was an apt symbol of the past and its threatened eclipse in late century bode ill for the future. The preservationists in Virginia and New England thus turned to the past to buttress their future. The Gospel of Preservation and its tenets of responsible rule, personal character, Anglo-Saxonism, and obedience to law and order were preached to help protect all that they valued from the past.

Historic preservationists strove to maintain the cultural hegemony which they had inherited from their forefathers. The work of the APVA and the SPNEA involved more than honoring revered ancestors and preserving their hallowed homes. It included as well the preservation of Anglo-Saxon, traditionalist culture in a land which had suddenly turned hostile and foreign. Their study, monumentalization, and incorporation of history actually became a means to influence the values and way of life which the present would hand to the future. History was used, therefore, not

⁶⁵ Wiebe, The Search for Order, p. 12.

only to justify the leadership of traditionalist Americans, but to teach that fact as well to newer generations and immigrants. As J. H. Plumb explained, the past "had to contain the wisdom, the morality, the dreams and the solace. It was needed to strengthen the purpose of those who possessed power and, equally important, to reconcile those who lacked it."⁶⁶

Through the sanctification of the past, preservationists also worked to protect their notion of a harmonious relationship between the individual and community. The cultural norm which was idealized by the preservationists resembled closely that of the neo-classic hero and his community. In the modern era this norm contrasted sharply with the philosophies of both unrestrained individualism and democratic collectivism. During the Gilded Age the hero of society had been the successful self-made man who was unfettered by governmental and societal restraints. The rampant abuses which resulted from this individualism and its cult of Napoleon, however, created serious concerns among traditionalists. At the same time they also feared what they perceived to be collectivism and socialism growing within the ranks of the working and farming populations. Actually traditionalists cringed whenever any organized system empowered the lower classes, whether it was an immigrant-based political machine, a class-conscious trade union, or an alliance of Readjusters and blacks.

The middle ground between collectivism and individualism was the reformed individualism of middle-class culture. When preservationists idealized their forebears' leadership of and service to the community, they were attempting to salvage the tarnished reputation of individualism,

⁶⁶Plumb, The Death of the Past, p. 45.

to reform the notion of elite rule, and to stave off the socialism which they feared. Their model of the individual in the community was obviously chosen as a device to mold the present generations. Not only did it induce the lower classes to work individually up the ladder of advancement, it also obviated the necessity for socialistic solutions. The model proffered by traditionalists, moreover, acted as a rebuke to the actions of the unfettered individualist and, more importantly, implied that a select and enlightened leadership, guided by traditionalism, could skillfully improve society. What was most important in their calculations, therefore, was the dominance of traditionalism as the philosophic code shaping this leadership.

Since the symbols of the past are essential in the transmission and inculcation of traditional values and norms, the work of historic preservation became an important means to regenerate traditionalism and to ensure its imprint upon present and future generations. Anglo-Saxon traditionalism actually had once been a relatively unchallenged hegemonic system in America, but in the late nineteenth century it vied with alternatives, such as the immigrants' cultures, working-class and agricultural collectivism, and ultramodernism, for control of the American future. Anglo-Saxon traditionalism constituted a hegemonic system because within its culture there was a defined sense of the past which implied a conception of the present and future. It held a philosophy and a code of action which not only shaped and limited the perspectives of the individual, but his alternatives in life as well. As Raymond Williams explained, a hegemony "is a lived system of meanings and values--constitutive and constituting--which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the

society. . . . It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense 'a culture', but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes." The dominance of a hegemonic culture is often very subtle. "If the pressures and limits of a given form of domination are to this extent experienced and in practice internalized," he suggested, "the whole question of class rule, and of opposition to it, is transformed."⁶⁷ What could be internalized, for example, were the habits of deference to upper-class authority once characteristic of Old Virginia, an unshakeable belief in individual responsibility for one's poverty or lack of success, and an unswerving commitment to the work ethic.

Cultural hegemony, however, is a process which adapts to a developing society and thus "has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, [and] challenged by pressures not at all its own." Historic preservation, one form of this renewal and recreation, assists the hegemonic culture by connecting past and present. As Williams explained, "it is at the vital points of connection, where a version of the past is used to ratify the present and to indicate directions for the future, that a selective tradition is at once powerful and vulnerable." Preserved buildings and their accompanying interpretations serve subtly as those connectors. They are cultural symbol systems which generally, according to Clifford Geertz, are pivotal in shaping observers' attitudes. "Human thinking," he observed, "is primarily an overt act conducted in terms of the objective materials

⁶⁷ Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 110; see also Williams, Culture and Society, pp. 325-326.

of the common culture, and only secondarily a private matter."⁶⁸ A key factor in the development of society, therefore, is who chooses and controls the symbols for the past, present, and future.

Conservatives have long prized domestic architecture as the true symbol or image of America. As Allen Guttman noted, "the house is the visible symbol of tradition, of permanence, of man's mastery of the primary environment. . . . The house contains, in Henry James's phrase, 'the sense of the past.'" The preserved house, especially when arranged as a house museum, accordingly acts as a powerful symbol system. "Any person, whether scholar or member of the general public," explained Harold Skramstad, "leaves the real world when he enters a museum and enters a contrived environment." Although "the traditional cultural role of the museum has conditioned us" to accept the display's interpretation, that rendition of history is not necessarily authentic. The period rooms of the early twentieth century, Elizabeth Stillinger explained, were more "expressions of a personal and romantic vision rather than historically accurate re-creations."⁶⁹ These personal visions and values similarly shaped the Gospel of Preservation and traditionalists' assertions of their cultural hegemony over the present.

The drive for cultural hegemony by traditionalists and the appeal of the Gospel of Preservation were therefore vitally linked. The values

⁶⁸Williams, Marxism and Literature, pp. 112, 116; Geertz, "The Growth of Culture and the Evolution of Mind," in The Interpretation of Cultures, p. 83.

⁶⁹Allen Guttman, "Images of Value and the Sense of the Past," New England Quarterly 35 (March 1962):4; Harold K. Skramstad, Jr., "Interpreting Material Culture: A View from the Other Side of the Glass," in Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. by Ian M. G. Quimby (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 180; Stillinger, The Antiquers, p. 282.

and way of life which buttressed the gospel, however, were largely those of the propertied upper and middle classes. They entailed person-oriented reforms and therapy, rather than real cures for the many substantive problems in society. As John William Ward maintained, these traditionalists attempted "to impose a cultural ideal, inherited from the past and deeply cherished, onto a present to which the ideal had little, if any relevance." Since these ideals were ethnocentric and class-bound, they had a limited appeal to a sizable segment of the population. In the Boston of 1900, Sam Bass Warner estimated for example, "perhaps 40 percent of the city's population did not have middle class aspirations."⁷⁰ Therefore, the Gospel of Preservation offered little to those Americans who were crowded and segregated in the cities or grossly underpaid and dehumanized in the factories. Conservative reformers nonetheless recast the old, individualistic solutions in an era when panaceas such as the self-help theories failed really to address the maladies within the society.

While the Gospel of Preservation offered little to most Americans, it had a definite appeal among the middle and upper classes. Traditionalism had relevance for them as they attempted to find meaning and anchor their lives in corporate and modern America. Throughout the Progressive era preservationists had worked primarily to insure the cultural hegemony of traditionalism within these propertied classes. Most traditionalists

⁷⁰ John William Ward, Red, White, and Blue: Men, Books, and Ideas in American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 245. Ward declared it "a simple observation that people perceive reality largely from the angle of vision provided by the concepts that they derive from tradition. They will persist in seeing the world from their inherited perspective even when, from our later perspective, it seems to us to make little sense of their world"; see *ibid.*, pp. 239-240; Warner, Streetcar Suburbs, p. 9.

expressed admiration for the discipline, efficiency, work ethic, and character which were necessary to succeed in modern-day business. On the other hand, the type of leader which was revered by the middle and upper classes during the First World War and after, according to Theodore Greene, bore a strong resemblance to the neo-classic ideal which had been earlier prized by traditionalists. The newer hero, however, was the corporate manager and it was generally expected that he would bring order to factory and city through the cultivation of efficiency and disciplined character. The crucial difference between the two heroes, however, was that the manager served the corporation, while the old-time hero had served society.⁷¹ Yet in the corporate 1920s, when the business of America was business, the interests of corporation and society were generally considered one and the same. Since historic preservationists had been from and largely concerned with these propertied classes, it was not surprising that common class interests and shared philosophies would be strong.

Along with this shift in the image of the ideal hero came a modification of the cultural hegemony of traditionalism. According to the studies of Jackson Lears, most traditionalists and antimodernists by the 1920s had reached an accommodation, albeit sometimes with reservations, with the corporate, bureaucratic system. Historic preservationists actually had made determined appeals to the business sector many years earlier. While the APVA had acted as a bridge between the Old and New Souths, the leaders of the SPNEA, such as Appleton, had consistently close ties with the traditionalist businessmen of Boston. By the close of the

⁷¹ Greene, America's Heroes, p. 324.

Progressive era both traditionalists and corporate leaders advocated, according to Lears, a personal reformation of the individual and a therapeutic philosophy, both of which emphasized a study of American history and traditions.

What had changed from the late nineteenth century for traditionalists, therefore, was the sense of Protestant zealotry in the reformation of society, a quality which had been seen particularly in the APVA during the crises of late century. Preservationists and traditionalists instead focused their efforts upon the solidification of the leadership and propertied classes through traditionalism. Generally accepting the tenets of the civil religion--including the notions of mission, progress, Anglo-Saxonism, and the holiness of patriotism--preservationists, traditionalists, and corporate leaders aligned by the 1920s. Class interests, therapeutic values, and the equation of community and corporation brought these forces together. It was not so much a fact that preservationists had changed with the times, although they did, but that the corporate leader and businessman found history to be both an individual therapy and a justification for their present high standing. While Lears has conjectured that the value of historical symbols was lost in this process, it is more appropriate to suggest that new uses were employed for the old symbols by the leaders of the hegemonic culture in order to strengthen their influence. After all, both George Washington and Jesus Christ were pictured in the 1920s as practical organization men and leaders. When the forces of traditionalism and corporate business allied, Lears concluded, it "marked a key transformation of the cultural hegemony of the dominant classes in America."⁷² Traditionalism, in fact, became a

⁷²Lears, No Place of Grace, p. xv; see particularly pp. 301-304.

principal buttress for the corporate leader. As Appleton had suggested to Andrew Carnegie, and as W. A. R. Goodwin soon convinced John D. Rockefeller, preserved history could serve as a monument to a corporate leader as well as to his image of America.

Historic preservationists in the 1920s continued the work which they had begun in the previous decades. The traditional virtues and values which they had earlier prized were still considered to be the keys for the individual's reform. While the personal ideals of the preservationists may not have changed, what did lead to a different tone in their oratory perhaps was the changed nature of preservation activity. By the 1920s the APVA and the SPNEA essentially had become historic preservation corporations. Their leaders had to spend more and more of their time managing houses and sites, raising moneys, administering staffs, and protecting their general property interests. While their preservation work in the 1920s had definite continuities and parallels with earlier activity, what was different, as Lears has suggested, was the diminished mission of societal reform.

Preservationists naturally had varied attitudes toward their more mature organizations. Historic preservation became for some a self-justifying profession; for others it was a means to reform and to find meaning for the self in a modern world. Many preservationists, particularly the women of Virginia who felt charged with the protection of morality, retained their social idealism and concerns, although these were, as they had been, ethnocentric and class-bound. But by the 1920s, the very sustenance for historic preservation work depended upon the generosity of the propertied classes which, especially by the era of Harding and Coolidge, owed their loyalties to the business and corporate ideals.

This is not to say, however, that preservationists were uncritical of some excesses, such as the self-absorbing materialism of the Roaring Twenties, but they always retorted that the ideals of the past should be studied and emulated. Rather than acknowledge the systemic injustices in their cultural order, they consistently called for the reform of the individual and his character. Historic preservation by the 1920s, therefore, had indeed provided a "sense of place" for many individuals lost in the fast pace of change, but that sense of place--when based upon traditional notions of expert rule, economic progress, the Protestant work ethic, and the protection of private property--served the needs more of the corporation and the propertied classes than the majority of the population. The cultural hegemony of traditionalism, when used in the service of propertied interests, did after all have a strong hand in shaping the future of America.

CONCLUSION

The historic preservation work of the APVA and the SPNEA during the Progressive era obviously entailed more than protecting edifices of timber or stone. It has been a central premise of this study that the broad-based approach inherent in cultural history, rather than the simple and unilinear tack of organizational history, was needed in order to evaluate the complex efforts and motivations of these preservationists. The very meaning of historic preservation work is obscured unless a historian can answer such questions as : "From which classes, groups, professions, and mentalities did these preservationists come?"; "What societal and cultural forces prompted them to act?"; "What individual and cultural meanings did these buildings have for preservationists?"; and finally, "How were these preserved buildings used to influence the understanding of the past and the shaping of the present and future?" Any study of these preservation movements evidently requires a basic prosopography of the leading preservationists, an analysis of the symbolism of the buildings which they chose to preserve, and an approach which integrates their preservation efforts with a broader movement and perspective.

This cultural history of the APVA and the SPNEA has revealed a central theme or philosophy in their work. The Gospel of Preservation was a firmly held belief that the past must be preserved as an inspiration and lesson for the present. In the case of these two organizations

the past largely consisted of the material culture which had been inherited from Anglo-Saxon leaders of the colonial and revolutionary eras. These preservationists, many of whom not incidentally held ancestral ties to those leaders, considered it their special charge to protect and commemorate this past. Refuting the contention that the government should undertake work in historic preservation, these preservationists keenly realized that this past and its legacies were the foundation stones for their modern-day influence and identity. The hold which traditionalism could have on the future was inextricably tied to the preservation of its symbols and customs. Such commodities, therefore, were indeed too precious to be left in the hands of a government, especially when that government might fall into the grip of a William O. Mahone or a James Michael Curley. As a result, select traditionalists founded, incorporated, and led these private historic preservation organizations and persuaded friendly state governments to sanction their efforts.

Perhaps what was most important about these preservation efforts was that history was often used selectively and tendentiously, either subtly or dramatically, to influence the present and strengthen the cause of traditionalism. Indeed, if the gospel was to proclaim the good news, its evangelists considered it their obligation to emphasize the virtues and strengths of their ancestors. Preservationists used history's extant buildings, model characters, and object lessons in a two-fold campaign. They first worked to unite the propertied classes, to make traditionalism their creed, and to inspire them to direct society accordingly. Secondly, they labored dutifully in their own way to counter threats, including modernism, radicalism, and collectivism, which they perceived as contrary to their conception of one-hundred-percent Americanism. Although the

leaders of the APVA wielded history more openly for partisan purposes than did their counterparts in the SPNEA, what each organization chose to preserve, to commemorate, and to sanctify was directly conditioned by their definition of "historical" and their estimation of contemporary societal needs. Realizing the inspirational force and symbolic power which these buildings could provide, preservationists strove to make this preserved past both useable and relevant.

Since their thoughts had been framed by fears of a precipitous decline in the quality of politics and society, these preservationists directed their appeals to the traditionalists and propertied classes who had generally led and shaped the community. Traditionalists have long held that men and women of property and standing were obligated to lead society according to inherited customs and values. During the late nineteenth century, however, many upper- and middle-class leaders had been distracted from this community service by personal ambition, economic success, and material comfort. The Gospel of Preservation, as preached by the APVA and the SPNEA, reminded the leaders of these propertied classes not only of their obligation to reform their own lives, but to carry that reform to a society which ostensibly needed order, discipline, and direction. Preservationists ironically focused their reformist efforts upon the individual at a time when an increasingly chaotic society and economy often showed the powerlessness of that same individual. Thus when the need was so apparent for strong action to stem the real chaos wrought by industrial capitalism and unbridled urbanization, traditionalists instead trumpeted the glories of the past when the small town was the keystone of society, the individual was the master of his own destiny, and enlightened leaders, not governmental intervention, had acted to

improve society and the economy. In a contemporary America which was marked by complexity and heterogeneity, preservationists thus sanctified the values and precepts of a society which had been relatively simple and homogeneous.

When preservationists voiced an appeal to improve the individual character, they were often distracted from a concerted defense of historic properties. This was particularly true of some Virginia preservationists who were more concerned with the defense of traditionalism than with the preservation of antiquities. A disconcerting fact in historic preservation during the Progressive era, moreover, was that the destruction of these antiquities was often perpetrated by the same classes to which the preservationists had the strongest ties. The directors and advisors of the SPNEA and the APVA included corporate lawyers, bankers, industrialists, real estate promoters, and other businessmen who could have wielded their influence more effectively in behalf of the defense of antiquities. Although preservationists had convinced many in the business and commercial professions that historic preservation was good for business, property values, and community order, generally the pursuit of power, profits, and progress resulted in the abandonment of historic neighborhoods or buildings and their eventual deterioration and destruction. Since the leaders of the APVA and the SPNEA depended for their organizations' sustenance so much upon the urban propertied classes whose wealth in turn was largely generated by business and commerce, preservationists rarely challenged the notions of "progress" and the profit incentive which were used to justify the demolition of historic properties. More often, preservationists criticized the impoverished tenants or inhabitants of a dilapidated historic building rather than the real

estate speculator who had manipulated the land as an investment, the businessman who had exploited the working-class tenant by charging exorbitant rents, or the affluent city dwellers who had abandoned old neighborhoods for streetcar suburbs.

Historic preservation efforts through the APVA and the SPNEA involved a joint defense of material culture and traditionalism. While some preservationists, such as William Sumner Appleton and Mary J. Galt, were most concerned about the deterioration of prized antiquities, other preservationists were equally, if not more, interested in the popularization and strengthening of traditionalism among the leaders of society. This commitment to traditionalism was equally strong among preservationists of both organizations and they firmly believed that a respect for traditionalism would lay the groundwork for greater preservation efforts. What was most different between the two organizations in this regard was the means by which they chose to defend that ideology. The SPNEA bore the stamp of Appleton's thoroughly ingrained antiquarianism and it in turn concentrated on architectural preservation. The APVA, on the other hand, was influenced by the anti-radicalism of Virginia conservatives and the moralistic concerns of women; its brand of historic preservation, as a result, was more diffuse and less architecturally oriented.

The alliance of preservationists within each organization, however, was similar. Some preservationists strove to protect the legacies of the past as documents which could be used to illuminate the lives of earlier peoples; other preservationists supported the movement as a means to further the Protestant mission of social reform. Members of ancestral and patriotic societies often aided preservation in order to ennoble their ancestors, to commemorate their contributions in the making of the nation,

and to use preserved history as a sanction for conservative influence in the present. Many businessmen lent a hand to preservation campaigns and regarded the movement as a vehicle for individualistic reform, conservative order, and civic boosterism. All in all, these preservationists valued the sense of tradition--and the ordered society and elite rule which it implied--and this factor brought them into the movement. While all these preservationists voiced the gospel with its premise that the past should be used to influence and direct the present, some centered their efforts on actual historic and architectural preservation. Others were more concerned with the protection and promotion of their concept of traditionalism in Virginia, New England, and the United States.

The APVA and their gospel had a substantially greater impact upon the traditionalist resurgence in Virginia than did the SPNEA upon that of New England. While the SPNEA's influence was diluted because it was one of many elite institutions advancing the traditionalist cause in New England, the APVA, on the other hand, became a principal influence and institution within the Old Dominion. Indicative of this difference was the fame and calibre of the officers and advisors which each organization drew to its ranks. The SPNEA chose its leaders from the professional and business circles, most of whom were well known in their respective locales and states. The APVA's advisors were equally well known in their communities, but their fame and influence had been established as well in the state and nation. Thomas Nelson Page, J. L. M. Curry, Philip Alexander Bruce, and Samuel C. Mitchell, for example, were notables who personified traditionalism in the New South. The cause which the APVA embodied and represented was such an urgent concern for the men and women who prized Old Virginia that it became a paramount and sacred duty. The SPNEA, on

the other hand, was an important buttress, but not a keystone like the APVA, for the edifice of traditionalism. It vied with other institutions and concerns for the attention of New England's patriots and traditionalists.

The differing impacts of preservation upon the public of Virginia and New England stemmed as well from the contrasting implementations of the Gospel of Preservation. The SPNEA and particularly Appleton obviously considered historic preservation a professional undertaking which required advanced knowledge and expertise. Hence, the protection of the past was consigned to a select group of professionals. In contrast, the APVA implemented its gospel in moralistic ways which would ensure the reformation of the citizen and the salvation of traditionalism. The APVA's more resounding effect upon the public was a natural result. Not only did its cause recruit traditionalists to combat radicalism and help erase the scars of war and reconstruction, but the women of the propertied classes also determined to extend their domestic values to the public sphere. Historic preservation in Virginia evidently had been shaped not simply by these concerns of women, but more importantly by extensive challenges to the racial order and class system which had been inherited from Old Virginia. In fact it might be a truism to suggest that the ideological tenor of historic preservation work is heightened by and bears a direct relationship to societal unrest and pervasive challenges to traditionalism.

The APVA's greater impact upon the public was also a result of its pedagogic, albeit partisan, use of the past. The Association instilled its traditionalist precepts on every podium, pilgrimage, and printed page which it sponsored. Its educational mission was evident through its

annual pilgrimage to Jamestown, its historical lecture series and programs, the innumerable memorial markers which it laid throughout the state, and its constant public exposure and recognition as the sanctioned protector of the past. The Virginia preservationists, moreover, used their buildings entirely as museums and shrines which then become powerful symbol systems representing the old order.

The SPNEA, on the other hand, was most concerned with a building's actual protection from the vicissitudes of the marketplace. After the purchase and eventual preservation of buildings, Appleton used the structures sometimes as museums, but more often leased them as residences, studios, inns, shops, or for other compatible purposes. Needless to say, museums and shrines influenced the public mind more than privately leased structures. The SPNEA, moreover, rejected the placing of memorial markers and considered it to be a distraction from architectural and historic preservation. Therefore, the contrasting implementations of the gospel by the APVA and the SPNEA resulted in a noticeably different calibre of preservation work in Virginia and New England.

The contrasting genres of historic preservation were additionally illustrated by the organization and operations of the two associations. The SPNEA was a regional and centralized society which was managed almost entirely by Appleton. The APVA, on the other hand, was administered by the Richmond-based officers and advisors, but it also decentralized some of its powers through the various branches and thereby anchored itself to the local communities. Whereas Appleton designed the SPNEA's charter and operations to ensure his own direction of the organization, the APVA's by-laws required a sizable quorum for meetings and their decision making was generally by consensus and committees. Most likely, Appleton had

fashioned his SPNEA as a direct contrast with the operations of the APVA because he regarded their decentralized structure to be highly inefficient. His main concern was for the creation of a preservation society which could act with speed and efficiency to save an endangered property.

The most important distinctions between the APVA and the SPNEA perhaps were in their actual estimation of a building's importance and in the meaning of preservation. Since the preservationists of Virginia were concerned mostly with the values and ideals of traditionalism, they understood buildings as metaphors and allegories which conveyed both the essence of traditionalism and the inspiration for the present and future. The principal goal of the Virginians, as a result, was to make history useable and immediately relevant. The interpretation of history rendered by the APVA, therefore, was often very personal, romanticized, value-laden, and colored by the needs of present-day traditionalist society. History was appreciated as a reservoir of fond memories and inspiring moments which would be used to educate, shape, and control the modern generations.

Many of the SPNEA's preservationists similarly regarded buildings as metaphors for the values and ideals which they admired from the past. But Appleton had particularly developed another tack during the Society's first decade. While he had been drawn to a study and preservation of the colonial past by his sympathies for the era's work, community, and personal ethics, he soon became equally committed to the protection of the past's material culture as a document, a source of ideas, and an artifact. Of course his appreciation for this material culture and its artifacts was shaped by his own cultural preferences, but the point is that Appleton began to treat the preserved past less as a metaphor, although it still was one, and more as an opportunity for a discourse

which present generations could carry on with the forebears of a distant time. Norman Isham, for example, had advised him to be open always to what a building's construction or design had to tell the preservationist as he examined it and asked questions of it.

Since Appleton was so concerned with this material culture as a source of ideas, he demanded that the procedures of historic preservation should incorporate the efficiency and regimen of science. His interest in an architectural preservation which was based upon archaeology, therefore, reflected his belief that the past's built environment had a great deal to tell the present about the family, community, and the styles of life and work in an earlier era. Typical of that notion was his contention that the gravestone was the most important artifact in a cemetery. At the same time the ladies of the APVA were concerned with the preservation of the sacred ashes held in Virginia's cemeteries. The two schools of thought reflected by the APVA and the SPNEA indeed were far apart. Whether history and its legacies were considered a source of inspiring memories or a collection of documented artifacts largely determined the methods which preservationists would use to implement their Gospel of Preservation. Although the two organizations at the time differed dramatically in their attitudes toward preservation, a half century later the two would hold much more in common. On the whole, the modern historic preservation movement has developed along the lines of the SPNEA's professionalism and Appleton's deep concern for an organizational regimen.

The methods employed by these Progressive-era preservationists reflected the differing needs of traditionalists within their respective regions. The Virginia association served a number of purposes in the traditionalist resurgence of the late nineteenth century and these included

the education of women, the application of their domestic morality to the public sphere, the unification of the ruling class in support of the Old Virginia Mystique, and most importantly, the strengthening of Virginia's traditionalism against modernism, radicalism, and national centralization. The SPNEA's goals, on the other hand, involved not only the defense of traditionalism's value system and the protection of New England as an Anglo-Saxon bastion, but as importantly the preservation of authentic symbols of the past and the professionalization of historic preservation. These contrasting elements in the APVA's and the SPNEA's Gospel of Preservation stemmed from the differing backgrounds, generations, cultures, and present-day needs of the preservationists.

Historic preservation efforts by the APVA and the SPNEA conformed moreover with the tone of progressivism in their respective areas. Both preservationist and progressive generally stressed the virtues of the small town, the rural ideal, the Protestant work ethic, and the notion of elite, professional, and responsible leaders directing and shaping society. Individualism also was a common denominator, but it was a reformed individualism which accented one's duty to society. Just as the Progressive movement was ethnocentric and bound to the propertied classes, so too was historic preservation. Each was premised upon a respect for and adherence to traditionalism, but recognized as well the need to adapt and modify traditionalism gradually to support and shape a new corporate America. Preservationists and progressives alike feared the radicalism which they thought was growing in the working-class, farming, and immigrant populations. They looked to the past and its values to define the one-hundred-percent Americanism to which others would conform. History became a means to uplift, educate, and control those who challenged their conception of America.

Organized and developed during the Progressive era, the APVA and the SPNEA carried their methods and perspectives into the 1920s and beyond. While the scientific regimen which was advanced by the SPNEA has become fairly typical within the modern field of historic preservation, the contrast between the past as metaphor and the past as a discourse still remains a point of general controversy. Equally controversial is the tension between various symbols of the past. Whether America is symbolized by the Mayflower Compact and the Jamestown settlers or the Statue of Liberty and its epitaph of "Send the homeless, tempest tost to me" depends largely upon those who wield these symbols in the present day. The work of the APVA and the SPNEA during the Progressive era, however, helped to incorporate, sanctify, and solidify traditionalism as a primary impulse in the national psyche.

APPENDIX I

Advisory Board of the Association for the
Preservation of Virginia Antiquities,
1895-1920: A Selected List of
Members Serving Five
or More Years

William Wirt Henry	Former Commonwealth's Attorney and state legislator
Alfred M. Randolph	Episcopal bishop of southern Virginia
Robert A. Lancaster	Investment banker and businessman
Wyndham R. Meredith	Corporate attorney and president of the Virginia Bar Association
Archer Anderson	Attorney, industrial executive, Virginia Historical Society (VHS) officer, and active leader of the Lost Cause
Robert Alonzo Brock	Historian, VHS officer, Southern Historical Society secretary
Joseph Bryan	Newspaper publisher, corporate executive, and VHS officer
James Alston Cabell	Attorney and former Virginia legislator
Thomas Nelson Carter	Attorney and former bank executive
J. L. M. Curry	Former U.S. congressman and diplomat, educational reformer, and Presbyterian clergyman
John P. McGuire	Master of a Richmond boys' school
Thomas Nelson Page	Attorney, writer, and U.S. ambassador
William L. Sheppard	Painter of the Lost Cause
William G. Stanard	VHS officer and editor of the <u>Virginia Magazine of History and Biography</u>
Edward V. Valentine	VHS officer, antiquarian, and sculptor of the Lost Cause
Philip Alexander Bruce	Historian and VHS officer
Samuel Chiles Mitchell	History professor at the University of Richmond, temperance leader, and educational reformer
Henry S. Hutzler	Bank executive

William Meade Clarke	Episcopal minister and antiquarian author
Samuel H. Yonge	Engineer and antiquarian archaeologist
J. Taylor Ellyson	Former Richmond mayor, Lieutenant Governor, and president of the Confederate Memorial Association
Harry St. George Tucker	Former attorney general of Virginia and Professor of Law at Washington and Lee College
John Stewart Bryan	Newspaper publisher and Richmond civic booster
Morgan P. Robinson	State archivist
Dennis J. O'Connell	Catholic bishop of Richmond

APPENDIX II

Votes passed by the Board of Trustees of
The Society For The Preservation Of New
England Antiquities on Wednesday,
October 14, 1914

WHEREAS, the present unfortunate state of war in Europe is causing such widespread destruction of buildings of the greatest artistic, architectural and historic importance, which, with their contents, are not only irreplaceable but represent also our most precious heritage from the past.

WHEREAS, it is the duty and privilege of each generation to safeguard the world's artistic heritage and to hand it on uninjured to succeeding generations in order that their inheritance be not impaired, be it

VOTED, that the Board of Trustees of this Society For The Preservation Of New England Antiquities hereby respectfully petitions the President of the United States to use his influence with each warring nation to the end that famous buildings and all other objects of artistic, architectural and historic importance be in so far as may be kept apart from the sphere of active hostilities, and where this is impossible that they be in no way used for purposes of attack or defence, or for military observation, since such use must invariably tend to attract the fire of the opposing forces, and be it further

VOTED, that the President be respectfully petitioned to urge the combatants to send to America for temporary safe keeping, and always subject to such final disposition as the treaties of peace shall require, such moveable art objects of great value to all humanity as may best warrant such precaution either by reason of their own merit or because of their present exposure to damage, as, for instance, from aerial bombs, and be it further

VOTED, that copies of these votes be sent other patriotic, historical and learned societies, with the request that they strengthen the position here taken by passing votes similar to these.

Source: Circular Letter, October 14, 1914, Circular Letter file, SPNEA.

1.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Differing methods of bibliographic research for the APVA and the SPNEA have been necessary in this study because each society established contrasting structures of organization, definitions of historic preservation, and implementations of the Gospel of Preservation. Since the SPNEA was largely a reflection of William Sumner Appleton and his philosophy of preservation, his correspondence, writings, and publications have been the principal reservoirs of information on that organization. The APVA, on the other hand, was not only a decentralized operation, but the product of many leaders as well. Historic preservationists in Virginia, moreover, were more ambitious than their New England counterparts in their attempts to influence modern-day society directly. The source materials for the APVA, therefore, were more numerous and wide ranging than those for the SPNEA. In general, the selection of research tools used to study a historic preservation movement depends in great part upon the organization's structure, the nature of its preservation work (for example, historical or architectural), and its interplay with the society at large.

Historic preservation movements must be analyzed within the context of their culture and society. In order to depict that culture accurately, the historian should first observe the workings of the culture, as would a cultural anthropologist, and evaluate the goals and purposes of the historic preservation efforts. Secondly, the historian

should integrate the findings of other academic disciplines, such as sociology and architecture, which are necessary in any analysis of the relationship between historic preservation and culture. Fundamental questions concerning preservation work must be asked about the reasons certain artifacts were considered valuable, historical, and worthy of both preservation and pedagogical use. In so asking these same questions this study has relied upon the cultural anthropology of Clifford Geertz and his analyses of the semiotic expressions of cultures. The work of sociologist W. Lloyd Warner has also laid the groundwork for an understanding of society's use of historical symbols.

At important stages in this study the insights of numerous scholars have been instrumental in shaping and buttressing the interpretation. Most important of these have been Robert N. Bellah and his analysis of the civil religion, T. J. Jackson Lears and his development of the philosophy of antimodernism, Raymond Williams and his explanation of cultural hegemony, J. H. Plumb and his theory of history, and Alan Trachtenburg and his illustration of the incorporation of culture. This study is indebted, furthermore, to Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. who observed in the late 1970s that the philosophy of the historic preservation movement was an unexplored research area. Hosmer's own monographs on the field have won a deserved praise, but his focus admittedly has been narrowed to exclude the philosophy and cultural impact of historic preservation. Since his perspective is generally defined by architectural concerns, moreover, he has given the SPNEA high praise, but has missed the real cultural importance of the APVA. His work, nonetheless, is the foundation for other scholarly explorations in the history of American historic preservation.

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VITA

James Michael Lindgren was born in Elmhurst, Illinois on September 3, 1950. After an education in the parochial schools of that Chicago suburb, he entered the University of Dayton in 1968. Graduating in 1972, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in history. After a year's respite he reentered the University of Dayton and received a Master of Arts degree in 1977 with a concentration in modern European history. Besides working in Sidney, Ohio as a historic preservationist, he also undertook nondegree graduate studies in American architectural history at Wright State University. In 1978-1979 he served on the faculty of Old Dominion University where he taught undergraduate survey courses and a senior/graduate-level course in historic preservation. In 1979 he matriculated at the College of William and Mary as a graduate assistant and fellow. After being raised to Ph.D. candidacy in 1981, he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha of Virginia, in 1982. His work, including that in historic preservation, lies in the orbit of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century social and cultural history. He is married to Mary Ann Weiglhofer, formerly of Lincroft, New Jersey, and they have one child, Brian.